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PRESS RELEASE

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**ARIZONA'S FIRST STATE PARK SAVED
BY COMMUNITY LEADERS**

TUBAC, Ariz. – A signing ceremony was held today at the Tubac Presidio State Historic Park to celebrate an unprecedented public-private partnership to save Arizona's first State Park. Agreements were signed by Arizona State Parks, Santa Cruz County Supervisors, and the Tubac Historical Society to keep the Presidio Park open to the public.

"We are thrilled to have found a solution during this crisis to keep this important National and State Historic site open for visitors from around the world. The Park offers crucial interpretation of Arizona's first European settlements and culture, is a focal point for international reporters, and draws thousands of visitors to the town of Tubac," said Reneé Bahl, Arizona State Parks' Executive Director.

"The Board of Supervisors recognized the importance of the Tubac Presidio to the community and promptly acted to save the park from closure. Thanks to the efforts of the citizens of Tubac and State Park's staff we were able to accomplish a task that seemed impossible in an amazingly short period of time. Everyone did a phenomenal job!" said Greg Lucero, Santa Cruz County Manager

Located in the middle of Tubac's commercial and historical district, the Tubac Presidio State Historic Park was scheduled to close March 29 due to significant budget cuts imposed upon the Arizona State Parks Board. Recognizing the importance of the Presidio to Arizona's history and to the economic viability of Santa Cruz County and Tubac through tourism, local groups, led by the Tubac Historical Society (THS), organized to "Save the Presidio State Park." In less than a month, over \$30,000 was raised by the Tubac community, and an operational plan was submitted to Arizona State Parks.

Even in the face of similar economic troubles, Santa Cruz County Supervisors agreed to serve as the intergovernmental partner with Arizona State Parks, and to then, in turn, enter into an agreement with the Tubac Historical Society so that THS could operate and maintain the Presidio Park.

Shaw Kinsley, President of the Tubac Historical Society, said, "This public-private partnership between the State, County and local community is an important milestone in the 250-year history of the Tubac Presidio. Remembered mainly as a fort that served to protect against enemy and elements, today we celebrate the efforts

of many. These individuals put aside differences and politics; looked beyond economic hardship; rolled up their sleeves; and, worked tirelessly to accomplish something very memorable. Not only did they save Arizona's first State Park, but they preserved the community "Where Art and History Meet."

The signing ceremony today celebrates this remarkable partnership. More information about the Tubac Presidio Park can be found at www.ths-tubac.org.

Tubac Presidio State Historic Park Facts

- Protects the ruins of the oldest Spanish presidio in Arizona founded in 1752 and is the site of the first European settlement in what later became Arizona.
- The Tubac Presidio is one of only three presidio sites in Arizona. (*One is buried under downtown Tucson and the other is near Fairbanks in Cochise County.*)
- Arizona's First State Park— dedicated on September 15, 1958.
- Six governments have existed at Tubac: New Spain, Mexico, the United States of America (with the Gadsden Purchase in 1853), New Mexico Territory, The Confederate States of America, and the Arizona Territory.
- Park preserves three significant historical buildings: Arizona's second oldest Territorial School House (1885), the Otero Hall (1914) and the Rojas House (1890). All are on the National Register of Historic Places
- The Park exhibits the hand press used to print the first newspaper in Arizona. "The Weekly Arizonan" was published in Tubac on March 3, 1859. The press is still operational and a commemorative edition of the paper is printed for visitors.

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