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**San Juan U.S. Post Office and Courthouse Reaps Honors**

New York City – The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) is pleased to announce that the U.S. Post Office and Courthouse in Old San Juan earned one of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's first presentations of the Chairman's Award for Federal Achievement in Historic Preservation. The award recognizes GSA's commitment to productive reuse of public landmarks.

"We are very proud that one of our premier facilities has received this honor," said GSA Regional Administrator Karl Reichelt. "This U.S. Courthouse and Federal Building will not only be recognized as a landmark in its community, but will serve the needs of the federal government and the U.S. Courts on eastern Long Island for decades to come." Reichelt noted that the Central Islip complex is a significant asset to the taxpaying public. "Constructing the federal courthouse solved major space and operational problems for the courts while also allowing us to plan for future expansion," Reichelt said. "The building is near fully occupied, and more than pays for itself in rent from our highly satisfied customers. It is truly a public asset beyond an architectural achievement."

Built in 1914, it was the first significant Federal building constructed on the island of Puerto Rico after it became a United States possession in 1898. The building is located on a site that has been strategic to San Juan's defense, economic growth, and development throughout its 500-year history. It is, in fact, actually built atop the foundations of the ancient Spanish bastion that guarded the San Juan harbor entrance for 300 years, until it was demolished in 1897 to encourage commercial and urban expansion. Preliminary archeological excavations yielded more than 16,000 artifacts, some dating to the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The project enabled the U.S. Courts and U.S. Postal Service to resume their presence in the building and to have a continuing role in supporting Old San Juan as an area for government and business, as well as tourism.

Here, at this historic building in Old San Juan, close attention has been paid to the historically significant features and to the public spaces. Much of the restoration work that has taken place in this building is located in areas that the public will have access to and be able to appreciate and enjoy. In this building, the GSA has combined three preservation approaches – conservation, rehabilitation and restoration – in its project to adapt this building for today's federal needs.

Old San Juan Restoration Project Honored by New England American Institute of Architects  
The Northeast and Caribbean Region's rehabilitation/restoration project of the U.S. Post Office and Courthouse in Old San Juan, completed in 2000, was recently honored by the American Institute of Architects (AIA), New England Chapter, with one of their 2002 honor awards. These prestigious awards recognize excellence in architectural design by New England architects. The San Juan project, designed by Finegold Alexander & Associates of Boston, was one of fifteen projects honored out of over 250 submissions. Both GSA and the project team were recognized and GSA project manager Kyle Brooks, along with representatives from Finegold Alexander, accepted the award at a special ceremony held in Boston on October 19. In their comments on the project, the selection jury stated, "This is a wonderful example of the social and civic value of restoring and reusing significant public buildings such as courthouses...[it] is also a model of recycling and reinventing that goes way beyond the conventional historic restoration project...[and] is the ultimate example of how to make the past part of the future and the civic value of investing in public buildings." Contact: Kyle Brooks, (212) 264-9656.

#### Architectural Woodwork Institute Honors Puerto Rico Project

The Architectural Woodwork Institute has recognized the Northeast & Caribbean Region's rehabilitation and restoration of Old San Juan's U.S. Post Office and Courthouse with an Award of Excellence. The award honors "the owner's support of the design concept and the Architectural Woodwork Manufacturer for the faithful execution of the design and quality criteria." The U.S. Post Office and Courthouse in Old San Juan, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, reopened in July of 2000, following a \$23.7 million project that restored its exterior to its 1940 appearance and identified certain internal historically significant area, mostly public spaces, for restoration or replacement. The original building was constructed in 1914 and was the first significant Federal Building serving Puerto Rico after it became a United States possession in 1898. It is located on a site that has been strategic to San Juan throughout the city's 500-year history and is, in fact, built atop the foundations of the ancient Spanish bastion that guarded San Juan's harbor for 300 years. A substantial, seven-story addition to the building, one that considerably altered it, was completed in 1940.

#### **Old San Juan U.S. Post Office and Courthouse Wins John Wesley Powell Prize**

On March 16, the Society for History in the Federal Government recognized the rehabilitation and restoration of the U.S. Post Office & Courthouse in Old San Juan, Puerto Rico, with its John Wesley Powell Prize. The award recognizes excellence in the field of historic preservation. Accepting the award on behalf of the Region and GSA were John Boogaerts, Northeast and Caribbean Region Property Management Branch, and Rolando Rivas-Camp, Director of the Historic Buildings and Arts Center of Expertise. The Region's reconstruction work on the U.S. Post Office and Courthouse started in 1996, following the recovery of some 16,000 artifacts that were discovered during preliminary archaeological work on the site. The facility consists of a 1914 building that rests on the foundation of a 1639 Spanish bastion, and a 1940 addition that sits atop the remains of the 1830's Spanish Customhouse. The building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. A reopening ceremony to celebrate the return of the U.S. Courts to Old San Juan is scheduled for May 5. Contact: Kyle Brooks, (212) 264-9656.

### **d San Juan Courthouse Restoration Featured in Documentary**

"El Correo y la Corte Federal," a two-minute documentary on GSA's recent restoration of the historic U.S. Post Office and Courthouse in Old San Juan, Puerto Rico, will be aired in over 60 cinemas in Puerto Rico from June 7 through July 11. The documentary was produced with assistance and cooperation from the Northeast & Caribbean Region, which received an advance copy of the script for approval. Project Manager Kyle Brooks supplied information and still photographs for the film. The production team will also make a translation of the script for GSA use. Contact: Renée Miscione, (212) 264-0424.

GSA is a centralized federal procurement and property management agency created by Congress to improve government efficiency and help federal agencies better serve the public. It acquires, on behalf of federal agencies, office space, equipment, telecommunications, information technology, supplies and services. GSA, comprised of 14,000 associates, provides services and solutions for the office operations of over 1 million federal workers located in 8,300 government -owned and leased buildings in 1,600 U.S. communities.