



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Contact:** Elizabeth Scott Shatto, Executive Director, Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area  
[lshatto@fredco-md.net](mailto:lshatto@fredco-md.net) | 301-600-4042

**Web:** <http://mht.maryland.gov>

## **Statewide Preservation Award goes to Heart of the Civil War GeoTrail** Geocaches hidden at 16 sites drive economic development, interest in history

**Annapolis, MD** – The Maryland Historical Trust Board of Trustees presented its 2017 award for Excellence in Public Programming in the category of Education and Community Engagement to the [Heart of the Civil War GeoTrail](#). The Maryland Preservation Awards ceremony took place at the Miller Senate Office Building in Annapolis on Thursday, April 20. Access a video about the GeoTrail created by the Maryland Historical Trust [here](#).

Created by the Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area (HCWHA) with help from the Maryland Geocaching Society, the project was made possible by a MAERDAF grant from the Rural Maryland Council and support from Visit Hagerstown & Washington County. The trail provides an exciting new way to experience the power of historic places. Geocaching is a real-world outdoor scavenger hunt using GPS-enabled devices that is popular worldwide. The trail includes geocaches hidden at 16 historic sites across Carroll, Frederick and Washington Counties. It is suitable for geocachers of all ages and levels of experience. Special GeoTrail hotel packages are available at lodging properties in each of the three counties; more information is available on [the GeoTrail website](#).

The project has received a very positive response since it launched on October 1, 2016. Data collected from the completed GeoTrail passports demonstrates that it is generating measureable economic development. Of the first 180 participants to complete the trail, 79% traveled from outside the Heritage Area to participate, 89% reported purchasing a meal/snack, 71% reported purchasing gas, and 8% reported staying a hotel in the Heritage Area. The project is also helping to increase attendance at sites along the trail. The Newcomer House, HCWHA's Exhibit and Visitor Center at Antietam National Battlefield, experienced an increase of 222% from 107 visitors in October 2015 to 345 in October 2016.

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151 S. EAST STREET  
FREDERICK, MD 21701  
INFO@HEARTOFTHECIVILWAR.ORG  
HEARTOFTHECIVILWAR.ORG  
301-600-4031

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