



BEAUFORT COUNTY News Release

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SANTA ELENA
FOUNDATION

Beaufort County Leases Historic Federal Courthouse to Santa Elena Foundation

Last night, Beaufort County Council voted unanimously to lease its historic federal courthouse building to the Santa Elena Foundation, whose mission is the discovery, preservation, and promotion of Santa Elena, the 16th century settlement established on present-day Parris Island.

Located on Bay Street in downtown Beaufort, the historic building will serve as the setting for a unique cultural interpretive center destined to become an important attraction for local, national, and international visitors. In addition, the building will include a planned archeological laboratory and serve as the first headquarters for the foundation.

“The strategic purpose of the Santa Elena Foundation is to accurately position Santa Elena in the historical record by promoting the role of the early Port Royal Sound colonial communities in the settling of America,” said Dr. Andy Beall, Santa Elena Foundation Executive Director. “We are most grateful to Beaufort County Council for allowing us the use of this historical building and providing the foundation with an excellent location to share with the public this important story.”

Foundation and County leaders hope that some of the interest, energy, and capital directed to the early settlements of Jamestown, Virginia and Saint Augustine, Florida will now be shared with Beaufort County.

“We are very pleased to lease the federal courthouse to the Santa Elena Foundation,” said Beaufort County Council Chairman Paul Sommerville. “The proposed cultural interpretive center will serve as a major attraction for Beaufort County and as an introduction to this very important, little known American story.”

The foundation plans to move into the building July 1, 2015. An initial opening of the cultural interpretive center is planned for early 2016, followed by a grand opening later that year, 450 years after the founding of Santa Elena. For more information about the Santa Elena Foundation, visit www.santa-elena.org.