



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE -- July 24, 2008**

Contact: Scott Hirko, Michigan Humanities Council, 517-372-0029 ext. 25, [shirko@mihumanities.org](mailto:shirko@mihumanities.org) or  
Cheryl Roland, Western Michigan University Office of University Relations, 269-387-8412, [cheryl.roland@wmich.edu](mailto:cheryl.roland@wmich.edu)

## **\$6,000 AWARDED TO WMU FOR FORT ST. JOSEPH OPEN HOUSE JULY 26-27**

(NILES)-----The Michigan Humanities Council today awarded a \$6,000 grant to the Western Michigan University Department of Anthropology for the third annual Fort St. Joseph Open House, to be held on Saturday and Sunday, July 26-27, 2008, on the archaeological site in the city of Niles. The grant is part of the Council's *Michigan People, Michigan Places ... Our Stories, Our Lives* program, which supports community collaboration for public humanities programs. The grant was presented at Fort St. Joseph as part of a media event to help publicize the Open House and announce the signing of a 10-year agreement between the City of Niles and Western Michigan University. The presentation included comments from the offices of U.S. Representative Fred Upton and U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow.

"This is an important opportunity for residents and visitors to better learn about the history and culture of Southwestern Michigan in the 18<sup>th</sup> century," said Jan Fedewa, executive director of the Michigan Humanities Council. "The Council is pleased to support this project which will help provide a better understanding of how archaeology can be used to construct history."

The Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project Open House will feature: ongoing excavations by students under the direction of professional archaeologists; an outdoor museum with informational panels and displays of 18<sup>th</sup> century artifacts recovered from the site; and a living history village of authentic historical re-enactors who demonstrate daily colonial life as it

(more)

was practiced at the fort. The event is free and open to the public, from 10 am – 4 pm on Saturday, July 26; and, from 10 am – 3 pm on Sunday, July 27. For more information, visit [www.fortstjosephopenhouse.org](http://www.fortstjosephopenhouse.org).

“We are pleased to be partnering with the Michigan Humanities Council on this event,” said Dr. Michael Nassaney, the project director and professor of anthropology at Western Michigan University. “Their support will allow us to make a real archaeological excavation at one of Michigan's most important historical sites accessible to a wider audience.”

"This funding will help Western Michigan present our rich natural history through the lens of their professional archaeologists, and I'm pleased to support it," said U.S. Senator Carl Levin.

“Grants from the Michigan Humanities Council help Michigan communities study and preserve the state’s unique culture and heritage,” said U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow. “I am pleased to be able to support funding for the Council and for these important local community projects.”

“We have such a rich heritage here in southwestern Michigan, and this grant provides a unique opportunity for our community to learn more about our forefathers who first settled the region,” said Congressman Fred Upton. “I applaud the longtime collaboration between the city of Niles and Western Michigan University to ensure folks will continue to enjoy this landmark that provides a glimpse of life during colonial times.”

The Michigan Humanities Council, founded in 1974, is a private, non-profit organization, funded in part by the National Endowment for the Humanities. For additional information on the Michigan Humanities Council, please visit: [www.michiganhumanities.org](http://www.michiganhumanities.org) or call 517-372-7770.

#####