

## Durant Becomes "Preserve America Community"



WASHINGTON, DC - Durant was honored when the City received notification that Mrs. Laura Bush designated it among the Nation's newest *Preserve America* communities. (Photo by Susan Sterner of the White House)

"*Preserve America* communities demonstrate that they are committed to preserving America's heritage while ensuring a future filled with opportunities for learning and enjoyment," Mrs. Bush said. "This community designation program, combined with the *Preserve America* Presidential Awards and Federal support, provides strong incentives for continued preservation of our cultural and natural heritage resources. I commend Durant and its leaders for their commitment to preserving an important part of our Nation's historic past for visitors, neighbors, and most importantly, for children."

Mayor Jerry Tomlinson received a letter of designation signed by Mrs. Bush, First Lady of the United States and Honorary Chair of *Preserve America*, that Durant is now a *Preserve America* Community. The *Preserve America* initiative is a new White House effort to encourage and support community efforts for the preservation and enjoyment of America's priceless cultural and natural heritage. The goals of the initiative include: a greater shared knowledge about the Nation's past; strengthened Regional identities and local pride; increased local participation in preserving the country's cultural and natural heritage assets; and support for the economic vitality of our communities.

Durant is now eligible to apply for grants under the *Preserve America* Grants Program administered by the Department of the Interior. These matching fund grants of \$20,000 to \$150,000 go on a competitive basis to heritage tourism initiatives, promotion and marketing programs and interpretive/educational initiatives involving historic resources.

Durant Main Street, led by Manager Donna Dow, prepared the application for submission by the City of Durant. Durant was one of four cities in Oklahoma to receive the designation as a *Preserve America* community - Newkirk, Ardmore and Shawnee were honored as well.