



# CITY OF SAN ANTONIO AND BEXAR COUNTY



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## **San Antonio Missions Receive Important Endorsement**

### **Toward World Heritage Quest**

*Final vote slated for World Heritage Convention this summer*

**May 7, 2015** - The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), the World Heritage Committee's advisor for cultural property nominations to the UNESCO World Heritage List, recommended this week that that "San Antonio Missions" be designated as a World Heritage site. The Committee, composed of 21 nations elected on a rotating basis, will review the nomination and the ICOMOS recommendation and make a final decision during its upcoming 39<sup>th</sup> annual session in Bonn, Germany, June 29-July 8.

Nominated by the United States in January 2014, the San Antonio Missions nomination comprises five frontier mission complexes (including the Alamo) and a mission ranch situated along the San Antonio River basin. Under the ownership and management of an array of private and public agencies including the Roman Catholic Archdiocese, the National Park Service, and the Texas General Land Office, among others, the missions are proposed for inclusion on the World Heritage List as an exceptionally complete example of the Spanish Crown's efforts to colonize, evangelize, and defend the northern frontier of New Spain and comprises a range of architectural and archaeological structures including farmlands (*labores*), ranchlands (*ranchos*), residences, churches, granaries, workshops, kilns, wells, perimeter walls and water distribution systems (*acequias*).

The five missions are also a unique example of mission complexes lying in proximity and sharing a common approach to defense and which established dependent communities prepared for secularization.

The San Antonio community's dedication to the protection of these resources has provided a robust set of protections for them, including the most recent Mission Protection Overlay Districts as well as the substantial investment of the Mission Reach San Antonio River Improvement project and the River South Management Plan.

The recommendation is the penultimate step in a journey that began in late 2006 headed by the San Antonio Conservation Society to garner international recognition for the Missions. The nomination was prepared over several years with significant support from a number of organizations including: the San Antonio Conservation Society, Los Compadres de San Antonio Missions National Historic Park, Bexar

County, the City of San Antonio, San Antonio River Authority, National Parks Conservation Association, National Park Service, the Texas General Land Office, and the Archdiocese of San Antonio.

The United States will send a robust delegation to the meeting in Bonn, led by U.S. Ambassador to UNESCO Crystal Nix-Hines, and composed of State Department, National Park Service and local officials, including the County Judge and the Mayor.

“A World Heritage Site designation will strengthen San Antonio’s global business and cultural ties. In addition, designation would have a significant economic impact for both the City and the County. According to a study conducted by Bexar County, elevating our five missions to World Heritage status would generate anywhere from \$44 to \$105 million dollars annually in additional economic activity, create 500 to 1,000 new jobs, and add up to \$2 million in local hotel tax revenue,” said City of San Antonio Mayor Ivy Taylor.

Bexar County Judge Nelson Wolff said, “As we get closer to the final decision to be made in Germany this summer, the support of ICOMOS is definitely a welcome boost to our community quest for World Heritage status.”

District 3 Councilwoman Rebecca Viagran said “We are happy for the ICOMOS recommendation and look forward to the Committee’s decision, which we hope will allow us the opportunity to introduce many new visitors to our missions and our unique city of San Antonio.”

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