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CHAMBER ANNOUNCES ‘HISTORIC CHURCHES OF ATCHISON’ TOUR

Trolley tour gives inside look at some of city’s most impressive structures

ATCHISON, Kan. (March 5, 2008) — Most locals, even most regular visitors to Atchison recognize the wealth of historic church buildings in the city. Few, however, have had an inside look at the structures or the congregations that inhabit them.

On Saturday, April 4, five historic Atchison churches will open their doors — and their stories — for visitors, part of a new trolley tour launched by the Atchison Area Chamber of Commerce.

“We always want to provide something that the public will not only enjoy, but also learn from,” said Jacque Pregont, president of the Atchison Area Chamber of Commerce. “We have such a rich history as a community. Our churches have wonderful stories to tell. We hope this will become a regular or annual event, as we explore the stories inside all the beautiful churches in Atchison.”

Tours will depart from the Santa Fe Depot, 200 S. 10th St., at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m., and will last approximately two hours. Tickets are \$15 apiece and can be reserved by calling the Chamber at 913-367-2427 or 800-234-1854. Because Chamber officials expect the tour to fill up quickly, those interested in attending are encouraged to reserve a seat early.

The tour will visit Trinity Episcopal Church, First Presbyterian Church, First Christian Church, and the Choir Chapel and Saint Scholastica Chapel, both on the campus of Mount St. Scholastica. Tour-goers will be greeted by a member of each church, who will offer a guided tour of the interior, along with a short history of the congregation and interesting facts about the church.

The Chamber offers several successful tours each year, including regular Atchison history tours that run from April through October, the Homes for the Holidays Tour, which focuses on the stunning residential architecture in the area, and the Haunted Atchison Tour, which run one day each month in June, July and August, then regularly in

September and October. A special African-American history tour is also available for charter.

For more information on the Historic Churches of Atchison Tour or any of the Chamber's trolley tours, visit www.atchisonkansas.net.

The Historic Churches of Atchison Tour seemed a logical choice for the Easter season.

"What better time to focus on churches than the holy season when many refocus on their faith," Pregont said.

The following is a list of the churches on the upcoming tour, along with their dates of construction and one unique fact about each:

Choir Chapel, Mount St. Scholastica

1900

The stained-glass windows, which blend traditional realism and modern symbolism, were created in the 1940s. The background color, created specifically for the chapel, is known as "Atchison Blue."

Saint Scholastica Chapel, Mount St. Scholastica

1938

The large chapel on the monastery grounds was truly an international endeavor. The stunning windows were designed by an American, with technical direction by a German craftsman, and the faces were painted by an Irishman.

Trinity Episcopal Church

1868

Originally started as a means of helping beautify the church grounds, Trinity's Memorial Garden has become much more. It is listed on the registry of Kansas Quiet Gardens and includes several memorials to past members.

First Presbyterian Church

1880

The magnificent façade of the church is unmistakable, even in Atchison, a town full of historic structures. Inside, however, there are many hidden treasures.

First Christian Church

1913

Founded in 1882, this church is both unique (with its golden dome) and traditional (a collection of beautiful stained-glass windows). Two of its windows, discovered after 44 years in storage, were reinstalled in memory of George W. Shuck and Walter A. Shuck.

The mission of the Atchison Area Chamber of Commerce is to focus on the quality of life, attraction, growth and retention of jobs and businesses in Atchison County. Established in 1919, the Chamber continues to be the leading business organization of the

community. With the support of over 400 member investors, the Chamber delivers programs and services that make our community a better place to live, work, raise a family and visit.

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For more information about the Historic Churches of Atchison Tour, Atchison attractions or the Chamber's work, or to schedule an interview or photo opportunity, please call Jacque Pregont at 913-367-2427 or 800-234-1854, or e-mail Jacque at president@atchisonkansas.net.