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Preservation Review for Six WPA Murals in the Ariel

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HEADLINE: GSA to Initiate Section 106 Historic Preservation Review for Six WPA Murals in the Ariel Rios Building, Washington, DC

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WASHINGTON, March 16 /PRNewswire/ -- The U.S. **General Services Administration** (GSA) announced today that it will undertake a historic preservation review for six murals in the fifth and seventh floor elevator lobbies of the Ariel Rios Building, in the Federal Triangle in Washington, DC. The purpose of the review will be to determine whether the location of these murals in a federal office building is the most appropriate way to display them, given the nature of their content. The Ariel Rios Building is part of the headquarters complex for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

"GSA takes our responsibility as stewards of our federal workplaces, as well as the works of art in them, very seriously," commented Donald C. Williams, NCR Regional Administrator. "By utilizing this historic preservation review process, we will provide all interested parties an opportunity to inform GSA how they view this issue."

The six murals were installed in the Ariel Rios Building as it was being built and shortly after its completion, more than 70 years ago, as the new headquarters for the Post Office Department. The artists involved were employed by the Works Progress Administration (WPA), one of several federal agencies established during the Great Depression to alleviate severe unemployment. The murals under review include:

- * Dangers of the Mail and Pony Express by Frank Mechau
- * Covered Wagon Attacked by Indians by William Palmer
- * Opening of the Southwest and Consolidation of the West by Ward Lockwood
- * French Explorers and Indians by Karl Free

The review will take place under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. It will involve the District of Columbia Historic Preservation Officer and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and will provide a forum in which interested parties can make their views known. GSA will place several informational panels in the fifth floor north lobby, where Dangers of the Mail is displayed, to explain the nature of the issue and the Section 106 process.

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