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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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First Contract Issued On Historic Courthouse Renovation

Thomasville, Georgia, 25 February 2011 --- With all eight County Commissioners present, the Thomas County Purchasing Committee designated Pelham Variety Works as the contractor for the clock tower repair project. Pelham Variety was the sole bidder with a base bid of \$81,750 and alternate bid of \$84,166. The alternate bid would substitute weather resistant building materials for exposed areas of the clock tower. This is the first contract issued for renovation work on the Historic Courthouse project. Though referred to as "Clock Tower Repairs", the contract covers the total rehabilitation of the clock tower. Upon completion, the clock tower will be restored to its original condition. The Historic Courthouse Renovation Project is funded with Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) revenues approved by the voters of Thomas County in 2006. The 2006 SPLOST runs out on 31 December 2012. Up until now sales tax dollars have been used to fund the construction of the new Judicial Center on Madison Street and upgrade the county-wide 800 Megahertz radio system. Although sales tax revenues declined about 10% over the past three years enough funds are on hand to begin the rehab of the Historic Courthouse. If SPLOST revenues remain at the current level the project can be funded to completion without borrowing any money.

\$6 million is allotted for renovation of the Historic Courthouse. Though the project is about three months behind schedule it is within budget. "Construction plans are about 95% completed and we have been working closely with project architects Tony Andrews and David Steele. We expect final plan completion in a couple of weeks" stated Contract Manager Tony Huber. County Building Director Lyndall Knight noted, "During the demolition process we uncovered significant structural issues that had to be taken care of first. Remember this building is over 150 years old, but when we've finished everything's going to be right". Thomas County will act as its own general contractor and Director Knight is the Project Manager. Managing the project this way is expected to save over \$500,000 in construction costs.

The Courthouse was originally constructed in 1858, in the Neo-classical style, featuring porches with four columns on the Broad Street and Madison Street entrances. In 1888 the two porches and columns were removed and new additions extended in their place. The façade was updated in the Italianate style, giving the building a more Victorian look. The third major change occurred in 1937 with the addition of the Annex on the Madison street side. The interior of the main Courthouse building was also thoroughly renovated at this time. During the 1937 project most interior architectural features from earlier periods were modified, replaced or removed. The current rehabilitation effort will be the most extensive since construction of the original building and when completed its 1937 interior features will be substantially restored. The exterior of the building will retain its 1888 design.

Construction is scheduled to be completed by the summer of 2012. For more information please contact Lyndall Knight at 226-1313.