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## Immediate Release

### Media Advisory

#### Historic Bethel Marker Unveiling Ceremony

*The Renaissance Foundation* would like to invite you to Historic Bethel A.M.E. Marker Unveiling Ceremony.

**When:** Friday, June 19, 2009

**Time:** 11:00 am

**Place:** 1528 Sumter Street

*For more information call (803) 733-5634*

#### **About Historic Bethel**

Historic Bethel, founded in 1866, was one of the first separate African American congregations established in Columbia after the Civil War. The congregation worshipped in buildings on Wayne Street at Lincoln & Hampton Streets and at Sumter & Hampton Streets before acquiring this site. The sanctuary, a Romanesque Revival design, was built in 1921 and was designed by noted African American architect John Anderson Lankford (1874 – 1946). Historic Bethel is listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1982 and a National Heritage Tour Site.

#### **About the Architect, John Anderson Lankford**

John Anderson Lankford has the distinction of being one of the first registered African-American Architect in the U.S. with an established architectural office in 1987, located in Washington D.C. Lankford intended churches to be the center of black communities and included social halls in his designs. While much of his work was for the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Lankford also designed schools, lodges, commercial buildings. In 1922 after the completion of Bethel A.M.E. Church, Contractor Belton Caughman of Columbia, SC, in a letter of recommendation, wrote of Lankford. *We have just completed the construction of Bethel A.M.E. Church in Columbia) ....Lankford, the architect was careful, conscientious, thoughtful and used good judgment and common sense with the contractor, sub-contractors, and with all the foremen and workmen connected with the job....We have never met a more capable, competent and honorable Architect.*

#### **About the Renaissance Foundation**

The Renaissance Foundation is restoring and transforming historic Bethel into a Cultural Arts Center. *The Foundation's Mission: to provide cultural diversity, outreach, resources, partnerships and initiatives within the community in order to bridge the gaps of disparities and to provide a platform to address these issues.* Therefore, *the mission of the Foundation Cultural Arts Center is committed to embracing diversity in the arts and to preserving the history of our past for future generations.*