



## **AT&T AND GEE'S BEND QUILTERS CREATE ARTWORK TO COMMEMORATE BLACK HISTORY MONTH**

Quilt Celebrates the Spirit and Contributions of African-Americans

**SAN ANTONIO, Feb. 13, 2008** — To commemorate Black History Month, AT&T Inc. (NYSE:T) has announced the unveiling of a specially commissioned quilt that celebrates the spirit of African-Americans and highlights the unique talents of the renowned Gee's Bend Quilters.

The AT&T Gee's Bend Quilt, which measures 95 inches by 82 inches, was created by 46 members of the Gee's Bend Quilters Collective and features colors based on the AT&T brand palette. The artists, ranging in age from 19 to 90, worked together for more than 250 hours to complete the artwork, which is destined to become a part of black cultural history. The quilt symbolizes the individuality of the quilters and their multigenerational approach to African-American art and culture. During February, the quilt will tour the U.S. and make stops at AT&T locations in Atlanta; Birmingham, Ala.; Detroit; Los Angeles; Chicago; and St. Louis. The tour will be supported by members of Community NETWORK African American Telecommunications Professionals of AT&T, who will provide visitors with the history of the Gee's Bend Quilters. Ultimately, the quilt will be donated to the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW).

"The collaboration with the Gee's Bend Quilters has given us the unique opportunity to create a piece that will help not only to tell their story but to highlight the important cultural contributions of African-Americans," said Tracy McDade, AT&T associate director of Multicultural Marketing. "As we celebrate Black History Month, we hope this will be a tool that inspires people to preserve and pass on their traditions."

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## *AT&T Unveils Commemorative Gee's Bend Quilt/ADD ONE*

“Working with my mother, Leola Pettway, on our two squares for the commissioned quilt for AT&T was wonderful because it brought back memories of the old days, when we went from house to house quilting with all the women,” said China Pettway, member of the Gee's Bend Quilters Collective and member of the board of the Gee's Bend Foundation. “We sewed our history right into this quilt and are proud to celebrate Black History Month. This gave us the chance to sit with a large group of the women, singing and sewing together.”

Quilts made by Mary Lee Bendolph, a member of the collective, were featured in an AT&T broadband marketing campaign that was introduced last summer and included television, direct mail and Internet ads. As part of that campaign, AT&T also sponsored a three-city Gee's Bend Quilters tour to Historically Black Colleges and Universities, featuring appearances by several quilters.

The Gee's Bend Quilters Collective is a group of more than 50 women who live in Gee's Bend, Ala. The history of quilting in Gee's Bend dates back to the 1800s, when the women of Gee's Bend — which remains a small, isolated, all-black rural community outside Selma, Ala. — developed a style that featured distinct, bold, sophisticated designs. Blending the cultural influences of the area — European, American Indian and African aesthetics — the unique style and designs of the Gee's Bend Quilts have been developed and passed down through many generations. The quilts are internationally acclaimed — *The New York Times* pronounced the quilts as “[among] the most miraculous works of modern art America has produced.”

AT&T's long heritage of serving the African-American community stems from the company's commitment to diversity at every level. The relationship with the Gee's Bend Quilters Collective is just the most recent commitment to celebrate and preserve African-American culture. The company also invests in cultural events, such as San Antonio's Beyond the Dream celebration to commemorate the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Additionally, AT&T's activity has been recognized, with more than 20 notable diversity awards in 2006 and several distinctions last year, including being named 2007 Corporation of the Year by *100 Black Men* magazine and being ranked No. 1 among *DiversityInc* magazine's Top 10 Companies for African Americans.

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**About The Quiltmakers of Gee's Bend**

Gee's Bend is a small rural community nestled into a curve in the Alabama River southwest of Selma, Alabama. Founded in antebellum times on the site of cotton plantations owned by Joseph Gee, the town's women developed a distinctive, bold, and sophisticated quilting style with a geometric simplicity reminiscent of Modern Art. The women of Gee's Bend passed their skills and aesthetic down through multiple generations to the present and in 2002, an exhibition of 70 quilt masterpieces from the Bend, organized by Tinwood Alliance of Atlanta, Georgia, premiered at the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston. Since then, "The Quilts **of Gee's Bend**" exhibition has been presented at more than a dozen major museums, including the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York. *Newsweek*, NPR, CBS News Sunday Morning, *House and Garden*, and Oprah's *O Magazine* are just a few of the hundreds of print and broadcast media organizations that have celebrated the quilts and history of this unique town. Art critics worldwide have compared the quilts to the works of important modern artists, such as Henri Matisse, and the New York Times called the quilts "some of the most miraculous works of modern art America has produced." For more information, visit [www.quiltsofgeesbend.com](http://www.quiltsofgeesbend.com).

**About AT&T**

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