

# NEWS RELEASE

DISCUS is the trade association representing producers and marketers of distilled spirits sold in the United States.

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **DISTILLED SPIRITS COUNCIL OF THE U.S. ANNOUNCES \$1.2 MILLION EDUCATIONAL GRANT TO MOUNT VERNON TO RESTORE HISTORIC DISTILLERY**

WASHINGTON, D.C., Dec. 7, 2000 – The distilled spirits industry raised a toast to George Washington last night during a black-tie event at the Mount Vernon Estate to celebrate a \$1.2 million donation to reconstruct our Founding Father's distillery.

"This is a unique opportunity for the spirits industry to join together with Mount Vernon to preserve and honor our rich, cultural history," said Dr. Peter H. Cressy, President and CEO of the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States (DISCUS). "The distilled spirits suppliers, wholesalers and retailers are proud of this partnership to educate the public about a facet of our first president's life that not many know about – George Washington, the distiller."

The donation to Mount Vernon will be used to support educational programs in addition to the authentic reconstruction of the distillery on its original foundation. Through these projects, visitors to Mount Vernon will be able to learn about Washington's entrepreneurial spirit as a successful farmer and distiller.

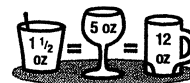
"George Washington led our country in so many ways, including his belief and constant encouragement to others that beverage alcohol should only be enjoyed responsibly," said Cressy. "Our industry always has and will continue to carry on this longstanding tradition."

In an effort to enhance the authenticity of the original distillery, the Smithsonian Institution plans to loan one of George Washington's original copper stills to Mount Vernon. This original still will be on view and used as a model for the four replicas in the reconstructed distillery.

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A FACT ABOUT ALCOHOL CONTENT:



“Through this unique partnership with the Distilled Spirits Council, Mount Vernon will be able to raise awareness for Washington’s belief in moderation and responsibility as we rebuild his distillery,” said Jim Rees, Executive Director at Mount Vernon. “Our educational programs will discuss how Washington considered liquor as ‘essential to the health of the Men’ during the Revolutionary War while he was equally aware of the dangers of abusing liquor. His message of responsibility is clearly echoed by the distilled spirits industry.”

Upon completion of the reconstructed distillery, expected in five years, Mount Vernon will be the only historic site in the nation capable of showing the distillation process from crop to finished product. Visitors who tour the distillery will have an opportunity to learn about the centuries-old process through demonstrations and hands-on activities.

“The responsible consumption of distilled spirits was a part of George Washington’s everyday life and, today, remains part of the lifestyle of more than 100 million American adults,” said Cressy.

At the time of its construction in 1798, the distillery was considered one of the largest whiskey distilleries in America. In 1799, Washington produced 11,000 gallons of whiskey, yielding a profit of \$7,500. Washington’s death in that same year halted the brief success of the distillery, and within a decade, the building fell into disrepair. Many stones were removed for use in other local construction projects during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

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Historic Mount Vernon, founded in 1853, is the oldest national preservation organization in America. For more information about Mount Vernon, visit online at [www.mountvernon.org](http://www.mountvernon.org).

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*Note to Editor: Photos available upon request.*