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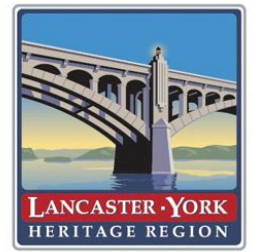
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Heritage Tourism Gets a Fresh Start

Lancaster County Heritage & York County Heritage programs ready to go.

Wrightsville, PA – The Lancaster-York Heritage Region, in partnership with the Lancaster County and York County Planning Commissions and the PA Dutch and York County Convention & Visitors Bureaus, officially announced the re-launch of the Lancaster County Heritage program and the creation of a York County Heritage program at a news conference on Tuesday, February 12, 2008, in the gallery of the John Wright Store & Restaurant, Wrightsville, PA.

“These programs will be a big boost for heritage tourism in our region,” said Mark Platts, President of the Lancaster-York Heritage Region. “Heritage tourism is alive and well in Lancaster and York Counties. It’s proven to be a major economic development asset for our region, bringing new jobs and new dollars to our communities. Heritage tourists spend more time and more money on their visits than other types of travelers. Heritage tourism works especially well here because we have so many authentic heritage resources to share.”

At its core, heritage tourism is preserving local heritage and sharing it with residents and visitors in an informative and entertaining way by offering an authentic experience that they can’t get anywhere else. It focuses attention on a community’s unique and authentic resources: natural, cultural and historic.

The Lancaster County Heritage program was started in 1994 by the Lancaster County Planning Commission as a way to designate local heritage resources as authentic sites, services, or events. Other communities around the country have used the program as a template to build heritage tourism programs. In Spring 2004 the Lancaster-York Heritage Region, working with the Lancaster County and York County Planning Commissions and a special advisory committee, initiated a process to refresh and expand the successful Lancaster County program and create a new partner program for York County. “We are delighted to announce that both programs are now ready to go,” Platts stated.

“We see the re-launch of the Lancaster County Heritage program as an essential tool for implementing *Envision*, the County’s recently adopted comprehensive plan,” stated Scott Standish, Director of Long Range and Heritage Planning at the Lancaster County Planning Commission. “Working with our heritage partners, the program will help protect and preserve the characteristics that give Lancaster County its unique sense of place. The program achieves these goals by highlighting authentic resources and providing visitors and locals with a quality heritage experience.”

“While a heritage program is new to York County, the concept has been well-received,” announced Felicia Dell, Director of the York County Planning Commission. “The York County Planning Commission is proud to administer the York County Heritage program under our Long Range Planning Division. We see this as an opportunity to implement the goals of the County’s comprehensive plan while working with heritage partners to interpret York County’s past and help shape its future.”

As a first step in launching York County’s program, three newly designated Heritage Resources were announced as part of an initial pilot program: The York County Heritage Trust’s Colonial Complex (Colonial Courthouse, General Horatio Gates House, Golden Plough Tavern, Barnett Bobb Log House), located on West Market Street in York City; Richard M. Nixon County Park and Nature Center in Springfield Township; and the Old Line Museum in Delta Borough. These sites were officially designated at the February 5, 2008 meeting of the York County Planning Commission.

About the Programs

While both heritage programs are independent, they share parallel management structures. Both programs operate under the same criteria to determine a potential Heritage Resource’s eligibility and both will eventually include all of the same resource categories. At the regional level, the Lancaster-York Heritage Region will partner with both programs to promote designated Heritage Resources, facilitate communication between the two county programs and provide educational and training opportunities.

Owners or managers of potential Heritage Resources that focus on natural, historic, or cultural heritage are encouraged to apply to the programs by contacting their appropriate Planning Commission office or visiting the program websites. A resource must qualify by meeting specific criteria for authenticity, interpretation and visitor readiness. After staff and advisory committees review the application, each Heritage Resource is officially designated by their respective Planning Commission.

One of the major accomplishments of the parallel programs is the development of three complementary resource documents to help potential participants apply for designation and better tell their stories once accepted into their county program.

First, a *Program Manual* has been prepared for each county, tailored to reflect the needs of each community but sharing most content. These manuals help Heritage Resource managers understand program requirements, including how they are organized and who is involved. They also explain the process for designation as a Heritage Resource, the benefits of designation and what is expected of program participants. Each county also has prepared a brochure that summarizes its program.

An interpretation manual, *Telling Our Stories*, has been developed to assist participants in both programs with sharing the story of their heritage resource by creating engaging interpretive materials that better inform and excite residents and visitors about local history. The manual also connects individual heritage resources to the five interpretive themes of the Lancaster-York Heritage Region, including: Bounty, Ingenuity, Freedom, Towns and Countryside, and Natural Wonders.

Finally, a *Graphics Style Guide* has been created to demonstrate the proper use of the graphic identity created for both programs. Each program has its own color scheme, certification seal and program logo, which are all designed to complement one another. Once officially designated as a Heritage Resource, the round certification seal featuring the word "Authentic" may be used by the heritage partner to promote their resource and the heritage program. These seals are what residents and visitors will use to identify authentic Heritage Resources. The certification seals were first unveiled publicly at the event in Wrightsville. The half-round program logos are reserved for the use of the Planning Commissions and the Lancaster-York Heritage Region.

More Information:

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The Lancaster-York Heritage Region is a non-profit organization based on the Susquehanna River that helps identify, preserve, interpret and promote the rich heritage and culture of York and Lancaster Counties. For more information about our mission and programs please visit www.StoriesoftheLand.com.

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