



Remarks for Press Conference
Thursday, May 20, 2010
Pittsburgh, PA (Mt. Washington)

The United States and much of the world remains in the grips of a severe recession. National governments are grappling with crippling deficits, and many hundreds of thousands of people are out of work. Particularly here in the United States, in the wake of the midterm primaries, jobs were a key factor in many of the elections.

The good news is that there are jobs being created, along with taxes, investment, housing units, and new life in old communities. This hope is embodied in historic preservation, and it creates jobs that cannot be outsourced.

This is the subheading of a new report, "The Economic Impact of Historic Preservation in Southwestern Pennsylvania," recently completed by the Young Preservationists Association of Pittsburgh and Pennsylvania Works!

The results are impressive. In ten counties in southwestern Pennsylvania, over a five-year period, 2004 to 2009, historic preservation projects created:

- \$475 million total investment,
- \$65.6 million in taxes generated,
- 1,204 new housing units,
- 5.2 million square feet of space, and
- 3,042 permanent jobs.

What better way to create jobs than historic preservation!

In dozens of communities across southwestern Pennsylvania, men and women are being put to work restoring old buildings, rehabilitating historic commercial and residential communities, and revitalizing struggling communities.

In Braddock, for instance, dozens of workers are being paid to re-shingle the roof, install new HVAC systems, repair walls and floors, and restore the beautiful stained glass



window of the First Presbyterian Church. In a community that has lost hundreds of jobs, historic preservation is giving residents new hope . . . and new jobs.

In the Strip District, the Armstrong Cork Factory, once the world's largest manufacturer of cork, has been restored and is now 100% occupied. This \$59 million project not only created 125 construction jobs, returned \$60.8 million in taxes to the city, and created 297 new housing units, it breathed new life into the Strip District.

And in Zelienople, Butler County, The Strand Theater has been restored, a symbol of new life on Main Street. The \$1.5 million project created 50 jobs and contributed \$88,000 to Zelienople's Main Street. Since they opened, The Strand has sold 3,850 live performance tickets.

These are just a few examples of the power of historic preservation. New jobs, new investment, new hope for old communities.

To further stimulate these economic benefits, YPA and Pennsylvania Works! call on the Pennsylvania legislature to pass a state law that provides incentives to owners of historic properties to preserve and reuse their old buildings. For the past ten years, the Pennsylvania legislature has been considering this legislation, but has failed to act. The time to act is now.

The proposed legislation would provide direct grants to owners of historic properties to be used for building rehabilitation. It provides \$15,000 for owners of residential properties, and up to \$500,000 for owners of commercial properties. These funds not only fix up historic properties, but they employ local skilled labor that cannot be outsourced.

This economic impact report underscores the need for Pennsylvania to adopt this preservation incentive legislation to extend the economic benefits of preservation to all communities across the Commonwealth. Preservation puts people back to work, restores our core communities, and reinvigorates the tax base.

This new economic impact report is the definition of YPA's slogan, "Give Life to History."