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New Report: Historic Preservation Generates \$475 Million in Southwestern Pennsylvania

Pittsburgh (Mt. Washington), Thursday, May 20, 2010. The Young Preservationists Association of Pittsburgh (YPA), in partnership with Pennsylvania Works! announce the completion of the first quantitative analysis of the economic impact of historic preservation in Southwestern Pennsylvania. The report shows that historic preservation impacts the economy with \$475 million in regional investment, \$65.6 million in tax revenues from increased wages and improved property, 5.2 million square feet of renovated space, and the creation of more than 3,000 permanent jobs for local residents.

The period of study focused on historic preservation projects between 2004 and 2009 in ten counties in southwestern Pennsylvania: Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Washington, Somerset, and Westmoreland. This study provides community leaders with evidence that preservation creates jobs that cannot be outsourced, generates new investment, increases tax revenues, and stimulates business development within communities.

To further stimulate these economic benefits, YPA and Pennsylvania Works! urge the passage of a state law that provides incentives to owners of historic properties to preserve and reuse their old buildings. 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.

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Quotes

According to YPA's CEO **Dan Holland**, "This report shows what we have been saying all along: preservation works. We hope that it provides the impetus necessary for the state legislature to pass the historic preservation incentive legislation that not only encourages the restoration of old buildings, but puts Pennsylvanians back to work."

James Hill, YPA's board chair, says "This report quantifies the economic impact that preservation provides, benefitting the community and region at large. To ensure that future generations can enjoy our region's history, we call upon the state legislature to pass incentives that will encourage investment in our state's historic buildings."

Walter Gallas, the director of the *National Trust for Historic Preservation*, stated "...This study adds to mounting research proving that rehabilitating older buildings can have a profound and positive impact on the economic health of communities. The National Trust for Historic Preservation has seen numerous examples of states financially benefitting by the adoption of legislation incentivizing the re-use and rehabilitation of historic structures. Pennsylvania can join these ranks by passing a statewide historic tax credit program."

Greg Panza, the Program Manager of the *Mount Washington Community Development Corporation*, reminisced "...after living in Phoenix, Arizona for a few years, where everything is new, I yearned to return to my hometown to celebrate Pittsburgh's historical assets, Main Streets, and neighborhoods which set it apart from other cities. Our region has a wealth of buildings that contribute to historical context of our communities that unfortunately are in jeopardy of being demolished because there simply are not enough incentives for property owners and developers to justify keeping them. Legislation that can make revitalization projects more attractive are critical if we hope to preserve the history of our communities."

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"In 31 states across the country, the availability of a state historic rehabilitation tax credit coupled with the existing federal program, has resulted not only in the preservation of our historic buildings and revitalization of neighborhoods and towns, but it has leveraged massive amounts of private investment and economic development," says **Erik Hein**, *President of Preservation Action*. "Pennsylvania is missing a much-needed opportunity by not having a similar program. The numbers speak for themselves. This quantitative, fact-based report clearly shows the economic benefits of historic preservation in the southwestern part of the state. With a state historic tax credit, these benefits can multiply bringing jobs, community investment and new life to deteriorating buildings statewide."

"Preserving and enhancing our communities, health and the environment go hand in hand," said **Heather Sage**, Vice President of *Citizens for Pennsylvania's Future (PennFuture)*. "Economic vitality and progress depends on stable communities, good health and a quality environment. This report highlights how vital a state historic preservation tax credit program can be to Pennsylvania's many older communities, particularly when there are strong community partners like Young Preservationists Association providing education and support in the process."

Mindy Crawford, Executive Director of *Preservation Pennsylvania* said, "Historic Preservation not only helps to protect the historic places that are important to its citizens, it also puts them to work. The use of federal historic tax credits in the Pittsburgh area over the last few years have resulted in buildings being placed back on the tax rolls, new housing units created and good skilled jobs that stay in the communities. This same effect is happening all over Pennsylvania and the nation. Many states are also combining this effective federal incentive with state tax credits providing an even greater impetus for reusing our historic buildings and making our communities strong and vibrant. Pennsylvania could benefit greatly from the passage of historic incentive legislation."

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Ed Boito, Campaign Manager for the *Pennsylvania Works!* Campaign, stated, “The results of this study prove that by investing in the preservation of our historic buildings, numerous well-paying jobs can be created. In addition, the unique character of our communities and neighborhoods are maintained, while creating economic benefits for local businesses and residents alike.” The Pennsylvania Works! Campaign is a coalition of state wide and regional organizations promoting economic opportunities and job creation, government efficiency, and creating vibrant, prosperous, and livable communities throughout Pennsylvania.

About the Young Preservationists Association

Incorporated in 2002, the YPA is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit comprised of dynamic preservation leaders throughout the region organized to ignite a new historic preservation movement in southwestern Pennsylvania. The mission of Young Preservationists Association of Pittsburgh is the participation of young people in the preservation of historic resources.

Please join YPA, as it hosts its annual Historic Preservation Celebration, “Old is the New Green.” YPA will release its new list of the “Top 10 Best Preservation Opportunities in the Pittsburgh Area” at the Kelly-Strayhorn Theater in East Liberty on May 21, 2010. The event starts at 6:00 p.m. Ten sites from six counties will be featured this year, representing industrial sites, Main Street commercial buildings, schools, and a bridge. It’s an exciting list of preservation opportunities that speaks volumes about the potential for community renewal.

About Penn Future and Pennsylvania Works!

Penn Future is a statewide public interest membership organization that advances policies to protect and improve the state’s environment and economy. With offices in Harrisburg, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, West Chester, and Wilkes-Barre, Penn Future’s activities include litigating cases before regulatory bodies and in local, state and federal courts, advocating and advancing legislative action on a state and federal level, public education and assisting citizens in public advocacy. Penn Future coordinates the Pennsylvania Works! Campaign.

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