



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 27, 2006

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2006 PENNSYLVANIA AT RISK ANNOUNCED IN GETTYSBURG

The Gettysburg National Military Park topped the list at today's announcement of **2006 *Pennsylvania At Risk*** made by Preservation Pennsylvania, a statewide historic preservation group. Melinda Higgins, Executive Director, of Preservation Pennsylvania announced all ten resources at a press conference held this morning at the Pennsylvania Memorial in the Gettysburg National Military Park.

Richard Moe, President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, joined representatives of Preservation Pennsylvania, the National Parks Conservation Association and the Civil War Preservation Trust for the announcement. The Gettysburg National Military Park is among the most sacred places in our nation. Three violent days in July 1863 produced 50,000 casualties and a turning point in the Civil War and our nation. Gettysburg is a commemorative and educational site of premier importance that attracts 1.8 million visitors annually. A proposed casino only a mile and a half away from the boundaries of the Battlefield would mar the experience of visitors to Gettysburg.

"In addition to undercutting Gettysburg's thriving heritage tourism industry, the proposed casino would degrade one of the most beloved and historic sites in the nation," said Richard Moe, president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. "The place where Americans bravely fought to save the Union is irreplaceable and now, more than ever, we must work to preserve and protect this national treasure."

Pennsylvania At Risk serves as a representative sampling of the Commonwealth's most endangered historic resources. For the purpose of the list, endangerment is defined as threat of demolition, significant deterioration, vandalism, alteration, and/or loss of context. It is our belief that publication of this list draws statewide attention to the plight of Pennsylvania's historic resources, promotes local action to protect resources, and encourages additional state funding for historic sites.

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Other resources included on this year's Pennsylvania At Risk list include:

3100 Block Main Street, Caernarvon Township, Berks County

An entire block (five buildings) is threatened with demolition for a new major chain drugstore. These buildings represent some of the oldest in Morgantown constructed between 1750 and 1913 and are contributing buildings in the Morgantown Historic District. Several attempts have been made by the local community and the National Trust for Historic Preservation to work with the drugstore company to encourage them to reuse these buildings, or propose an alternate design or location. Although PennDot is currently reviewing the development plans for road occupancy, there is very little left to do legally to prevent this entire block from being lost.

Gruber Wagon Works, Red Bridge Road, Reading, Berks County

Gruber Wagon Works is an intact example of a small-scale industrial workshop for the fabrication of horse drawn wagons, carriages and cars prior to the advent of the automobile age. In 1972, the future of the Wagon Works was in question when the Army Corps of Engineers impounded Tulpehocken Creek to create Blue Marsh Lake and thereby flooding the original wagon works site. In the evaluation of the project, the Corps dismantled the factory into five parts and moved it five miles to the Berks County Heritage Center. Thirty years after its relocation, the building is displaying the effects of deferred maintenance. A number of structural deficiencies and water infiltration problems have been identified. A comprehensive plan to restore the building is needed as well as a major fundraising plan to undertake the work before the building is beyond repair.

Theodore Roosevelt Junior High School, 1501 Seventh Avenue, Altoona, Blair County

This Neo-Classical Revival school building opened in 1924 and was Altoona's first junior high school. As the city's population and educational needs increased, Roosevelt Junior High was joined by the 1930 construction of the D.S. Keith Junior High School to serve the growing student body. The school is strong example of public architecture and the development of public education in Altoona. In an effort to consolidate the junior high school population into a single building, Altoona School District broke ground on a new area junior high school in April 2006. The new school will replace Roosevelt Junior High and Keith Junior High and will serve an estimated 1,800 students. As a result of the construction project, both schools will be abandoned by the school district. There is a proposal to adapt Keith Junior high into residential housing utilizing the federal Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credit. Unfortunately, Roosevelt Junior High is proposed to be demolished for additional athletic fields for the new school building. The consolidation of the junior high schools into a single building results in the loss of smaller, neighborhood oriented schools and the demolition of the historic Roosevelt school.

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Historic Yellow Springs/Chester Springs Historic District, Art School Road, West
Pikeland Township, Chester County

The small village of Yellow Springs has a long history. In the 18th century, it served as a fashionable spa attracting visitors who sought the healing waters of the spring. During the American Revolution, George Washington commissioned the first military hospital in the nation to be built there. In 1868, it was home to the Chester Springs Soldiers' Orphans School for children of Civil War soldiers. In the 1970's a group of concerned citizens saved the village from destruction and established Historic Yellow Springs, a village of eleven preserved structures on 140 acres. The former Cultural Center in the center of the village was purchased in 2005 by West Pikeland Township. Earlier this year, plans were unveiled for the construction of an asphalt road, salt shed and large maintenance building in the heart of the historic village. Despite the objection of the local HARB and concerned citizens, the road project was released for bids. Recently, the Township has agreed not to build these inappropriate modern structures but there is still concern for the integrity of the village. As long as the Township owns a large structure within the historic district and has a need for maintenance and storage facilities, there is the potential for inappropriate development in the center of this very historic village.

Guthrieville General Store, 1192 Horseshoe Pike, East Brandywine Township, Chester
County

Built in 1869, this building is threatened with demolition for a new convenience store with gas pumps on a prominent corner in this historic crossroads community. The demolition of this 19th century Italianate structure with Gothic Revival features will represent not only the loss of an important building but will jeopardize the integrity of the eligible Guthrieville Historic District. The Board of Supervisors has recently granted a one-year extension to the developers for the land development plan. The developers are currently working with the township to determine the feasibility of leaving the historic building in place and locating the convenience store behind it. While this news is encouraging, the fight is not over yet. A Section 106 Environmental Review is underway but unless all parties are willing to cooperate, the building may still be lost.

Winslow House, Winslow Hill Road, Benezette Township, Elk County

This 1850's farmhouse is situated on land owned by the Pennsylvania Game Commission. The Game Commission announced plans to demolish the house in 2004. The Winslow Heritage Council was formed to preserve the history of the Winslow Hill region where this house is located. After much urging, the Game Commission agreed to give the house to the council with the stipulation that it be moved from Game Commission lands. The Council was given two years to accomplish this move. Efforts to secure funding and land have been very difficult and with the original deadline of September 2006 looming, the situation was desperate. The Council was successful in obtaining a one-year extension but time is still critical. The council must identify suitable land and raise the funds to purchase and move the house before September 2007 or this important structure in Elk County will be lost.

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Neilltown Church Building, Pineville Road, Harmony Township, Forest County

A simple 1842 one-story wood frame Greek Revival church building is facing imminent threat of demolition. The Neilltown Cemetery Association (NCA) had plans to allow a controlled burn of the structure in May 2004. The NCA allowed the Oil Region Alliance to assemble private donations and negotiate a 36-month purchase agreement for the structure in April 2004. Since that time, the ORA has continued to work on stabilization of the structure and prepared a preservation plan. But only five months remain before ownership reverts back to the NCA. The NCA indicates that they still plan to raze the building if no willing new preservation-minded entity comes forward to take over full ownership responsibilities. Attempts to extend the time frame to seek a new owner have been unsuccessful. Time is running out for this building.

Bath Hotel, 201 Main Street, Bath Borough, Northampton County

The Bath Hotel, built in 1817 in the Federal style, is situated on a prominent corner in Bath Borough. The limestone structure has a long history as a vital part of the community. In 2005, an arsonist set fire to the structure resulting in major damage to the three-story structure. Although the current owners would like to rebuild, the damage is extensive and they do not have sufficient funds to undertake this project. The first and second floors are structurally sound but the roof is completely missing and a demolition permit has been issued for the third story. The loss of this building will negatively impact the Bath Historic District and will represent a huge loss to the community.

Lincoln National Bank, 1575 Avella Road, Independence Township, Washington County

Opened in 1905 in the coal-mining town of Avella, this bank was a vital part of the community in the early 20th century boasting of deposits in excess of \$1.75 million. During the depression the bank failed and it closed in 1931 with only \$ 43,000 cash on hand. The imposing brick structure is prominently located in the small town and has been deteriorating over the last 75 years. Township officials have ordered its demolition while the Avella Community Association have been trying to work with the current owner to have the building turned over to them for use by the community. The owner has expressed a willingness to work with the Association but the Township is pressuring for demolition.

Preservation Pennsylvania is a statewide, not-for-profit, educational and advocacy historic preservation organization and serves as a statewide voice on historic preservation issues. For more information, visit the website at www.preservationpa.org.

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