



DELAWARE & LEHIGH NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR
AND
NATIONAL CANAL MUSEUM
ANNOUNCE FORMAL AFFILIATION



THE HISTORY

On Thursday April 18th, the Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor (D&L) and National Canal Museum announced a formal partnership in historic downtown Bethlehem.

This unique and innovative alliance combines the assets of the Congressionally-mandated heritage corridor which preserves the trails and canals along the route from the coal mines at the source of the Lehigh River to the port of Philadelphia—mine to market--with the collection and story-telling prowess of the Smithsonian-affiliated museum. Together, we conserve and celebrate local heritage. Because...

Our region in Eastern Pennsylvania—in our backyards, on our main streets--is ‘where America was built’; it was here, in the 1800’s, that iron production launched America’s industrial revolution. Ours is a story of coal and coke, steel and rail, cement, and textiles. And, the people and places that led the way!

Since its founding 25 years ago, the D&L has completed over 82% (135 miles) of the 165 mile trail which reaches from the anthracite mines of Luzerne County near Wilkes Barre, to the Bucks County port at Bristol. For nearly 50 years the Smithsonian Institutions-affiliated and American Alliance of Museums (AAM)-accredited Museum has collected tens of thousands of artifacts and houses the archives which tell this nationally important story of America's industrial revolution first fueled by coal and delivered by canal.

Careful analysis by the respective boards, community leaders, and funding sources unanimously and enthusiastically agreed the alliance is in the best interest of community; it expands the reach of the mission, increases quality, and combines staff--to the benefit of all stakeholders. Making no mistake, neither organization is abandoning its mission, in fact, together we will expand them. Today, we enter a new era with a new partnership, and a thoughtfully-crafted plan.

SOME BACKGROUND... and Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

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- * Our mission and commitment to the five county, 165-mile corridor region remains the same: Historical and Natural Resource Preservation; Education; Recreation; Heritage Tourism and Economic Revitalization (valued at \$240 million and 3,300 jobs annually). We brought together two organizations with common missions yet individual strengths, and we go forward with a smarter organization, more capable of serving our community partners 'where America was built'.
- * Here's one example of synergy: already, we have increased to over 7000 the number of middle-school students reached; the quality and number of education programs has improved; and we're expanding the award-winning exhibits in Emrick Center to feature Finn, the main character in "Tales of the Towpath" traveling trunk curriculum now is taught in 70 middle-school classrooms annually.
- * Adult programs and other outreach are expanding too, such as the 31st annual Canal History and Technology Symposium scheduled for the fall, plus new exhibits, film showings, interpretative tours, and lecture nights.
- * Frequent visitors to Hugh Moore Park, centrally located in the corridor at the confluence of the Lehigh and Delaware rivers, will see improvements there as well. The park is the former site of the Glendon Iron Works, one of the first industrial parks in America, and one of the first steel manufacturing plants in the corridor. Bridge repairs are complete and a major restoration project will progress over the next two years. The Park, previously managed by the Museum but owned by the City of Easton, has received a \$475,000 facilities improvement grant from the Department of Natural Resources (DCNR) and Hugh Moore Park Charitable Trust. This small park encompasses every feature--natural and man-made--which makes our Corridor a nationally significant place...and is a microcosm of the story of America's Industrial Revolution.
- * Each section of the Heritage Corridor--from the anthracite coal fields up north, the natural areas of Carbon County, the vibrant Lehigh Valley to the port in Bristol--holds its own unique beauty and history. The D&L will continue to assist communities up and down the five county corridor to preserve and develop their natural, historic and recreational resources, just as the National Canal Museum continues to conserve our industrial history. Together, we will share and spread those stories, your stories, with all our neighbors. Already, several corridor communities are borrowing Museum artifacts for historical interpretation of their stories in their backyards! We look forward to celebrating yours!
- * Museum archives, exhibits, and education programs will be expanded with D&L resources and staff. In addition, Museum staff is now available to serve like-minded heritage partners in the region. 6,202 artifacts; 15,166 books; 300,000 photographic images; 31,824 engineering drawing drawings; 4,715 films, video cassettes, and audio tape oral histories; 12,150 linear feet of manuscript material, and 279 rolls of microfilm comprise the collection at this time. Call for an appointment.
- * D&L continues its land conservation and trail initiatives, classroom education tales, and unique programming. But joined with the Museum we're now at the center of STEM and heritage education throughout the corridor.
- * Emrick Center in Hugh Moore Park is home base and offices for both organizations. It continues to serve thousands of museum visitors and canal boat riders--iconic mule-drawn boat rides in the last operating locks on the anthracite coal canals, having already toured over 550,000 visitors-- run May through September.
- * National Canal Museum or D&L membership benefits remain the same, and members gain all the benefits of activities and programs of the other. Check out www.delawareandlehigh.org or www.canals.org; subscribe to our email list, Facebook and Twitter feeds, and watch for our communications.
- * Together, the best is yet to come. Join us!

Please, don't whisper down the canal. Direct any questions or interests our way:

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