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August 12, 2013

Alliance Agreement is Official!

The Board of Directors of the Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor (D&L) and National Canal Museum (NCM) signed a formal alliance agreement at a canal-side ceremony in Hugh Moore Park on August 8.



The alliance between the two non-profit organizations combines the D&L's historic, cultural, educational, and recreational programs with the NCM's nationally-significant archives, artifacts, publications, and canal museum.

“Our alliance is unique,” said D&L President, Elissa Garofalo. “We’re combining the D&L’s efforts to connect, revitalize and preserve important aspects of our communities with the museum’s ability to interpret the age of canals and early industrialism in the United States, a part of American history that has been the D&L’s focus since we were created by Congress in 1988.”

Tom Stoneback, D&L Vice President for Special Projects, noted that the alliance links “the federal power of a congressionally-mandated National Park Service program with the story telling prowess of a Smithsonian-affiliated museum.”

“The Smithsonian calls our effort ‘inspirational,’ the National Park Service says it is ‘very impressive,’ and the American Alliance of Museums calls us ‘ahead of our time’ “ Stoneback said.

Established by Congress 25 years ago, the D&L is comprised of five eastern Pennsylvania counties where historic transportation systems – the Lehigh and

Delaware canals, the Lehigh Valley and other railroads – carried anthracite coal from Carbon and Luzerne County coal mines to industries and commercial markets in Northampton, Lehigh and Bucks counties and beyond.

The D&L has focused on building the 165-mile D&L Trail, which will connect Bristol in Bucks County to Wilkes-Barre in Luzerne County. Now 82 per cent complete, the trail creates a public access corridor that connects major cities, towns and townships from the anthracite coal fields of the western Poconos to a historic river port near Philadelphia. The trail is open year-round to recreational users and is the site of organized walking, running and bicycling events. As an economic engine, the D&L Trail generates 3,300 jobs and \$240 million in annual commercial, municipal and state revenues.

D&L Board Chairman, Nick Forte, acknowledged the additional work to be done on the trail, but made a point of the many opportunities brought by the alliance.

"It allows us to expand toward telling and celebrating the stories of our heritage," Forte said, "when the Corridor was a recognized leader in American industry."

The National Canal Museum's mission is to conserve the hundreds of thousands of artifacts and archival records that tell the story of America's Industrial Revolution, which generated enormous growth in the Heritage Corridor in the mid-1800s. The Corridor was the world's center of iron production thanks to systematic development of canal and rail transportation. The region made outstanding contributions to America's social and industrial growth, particularly from 1817-1930. The National Canal Museum is a significant repository for stories and documents pertaining to the period's coal, coke, steel, rail, cement and textile industries.

"Together with the Heritage Corridor, we will be able to better tell this inspiring story of local leadership and celebrate our role in building America," said Canal Museum Chairman, Peter Marmaras. "In our classrooms, on main streets and in communities throughout the Corridor, the timing is perfect for this union."

The Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor is a 501c3 non-profit organization that enriches communities within the Heritage Corridor through actions and partnerships that conserve the resources, preserve the history, and enhance the quality of life for residents. Hugh Moore Historical Park and Museum is a 501 c3 non-profit, Smithsonian-affiliated organization located

near the confluence of the Lehigh and Delaware rivers and canals.

For additional information on the Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor, visit www.delawareandlehigh.org. For information on the National Canal Museum, visit www.canals.org.

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Our Mission: To enrich the communities within the Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor thru actions and partnerships that conserve the resources, tell the stories and enhance the quality of life for residents of the Corridor.