



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Neal Goulet
717-566-4541

**10,000 FRIENDS OF PENNSYLVANIA ANNOUNCES
WINNERS OF 2006 COMMONWEALTH DESIGN AWARDS**
Erie County's Tom Ridge Environmental Center gains top honor

PHILADELPHIA, Pa. (June 14, 2006) – An Erie County project that gave a former drive-in movie theater a second act as the Tom Ridge Environmental Center has captured the top honor in the 2006 Commonwealth Design Awards.

10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania Tuesday night bestowed honors upon 15 projects in 10 counties that represent the best examples of smart growth design from across Pennsylvania. The nonprofit 10,000 Friends presented its annual awards at a public event at The State Museum of Pennsylvania in Harrisburg.

PNC Bank, a part of The PNC Financial Services Group Inc. (NYSE: PNC), is title sponsor for the awards program.

“10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania recognizes the impact of good design on the success of a real estate development,” said Cathy Niederberger, senior vice president of community development banking for PNC Bank. “This year’s nominees included a wide variety of projects throughout the state, each planned with a great deal of thought about its impact on the environment and the community in which it was located. PNC is pleased to join 10,000 Friends in congratulating the winners and all the nominees.”

The Tom Ridge Environmental Center garnered the Commonwealth Design Award – complete with red-brick plaque – while the other projects received silver or bronze awards.

The environmental center, which opened in May, serves as a gateway to Presque Isle State Park. The 12-acre site in Millcreek Township was chosen to reinforce the park’s connection to Erie, lengthen visitor stays by offering

interpretive programs, and develop collaborative relationships with regional research and educational organizations. The center, comprising 63,000 square feet on two floors, boasts exhibition areas, a 75-foot observation tower affording views of Lake Erie, an orientation theater, gift shop, café and regional offices for the state Department of Natural Resources.

Janet Milkman, president and chief executive officer of 10,000 Friends, said jurors had a difficult task to choose among 15 finalists for the 3-year-old awards program.

“We had a record number of entries, from across the state,” she said. “These great projects are diverse in scope and reflect broad participation among the private, public and nonprofit sectors. We congratulate each of the entrants for their achievements.”

The other winners:

SILVER AWARDS

Allegheny County, Bausman Street Independent Living

Completed in January, the Bausman Street Independent Living project comprises four apartments in each of three buildings that provide affordable housing for low-income, disabled adults. It represents the first new construction in decades in Pittsburgh’s Knoxville neighborhood.

Lancaster County, Buckwalter Building

The 45,000-square-foot Buckwalter Building in the city of Lancaster was built in 1905 as the A.K. Mann tobacco warehouse. It turned over a new leaf as a mixed-use redevelopment project, which was completed in 2005. The first floor is home to the Brickyard Restaurant and Sports Pub; technology companies occupy the second and third floors; and eight luxury apartments complete the fourth floor.

Philadelphia, Martin Luther King Plaza

The winner of a 2006 award for regional and urban design from the American Institute of Architects, Martin Luther King Plaza has brought affordable housing and families into what had been a blighted, crime-ridden 15-block area near Broad Street, Philadelphia.

York County, Martin Memorial Library

October 2005 marked a new chapter in the history of Martin Memorial Library in York and the culmination of a 2½-year expansion and renovation project. Since the project’s completion, library visits have increased by 6,000 per month, circulation has increased 25 percent, and the issuing of new-member cards has increased 33 percent.

BRONZE AWARDS

Beaver County, Mental Health Consumer Center

Construction of the 7,500-square-foot, three-floor Mental Health Consumer Center was completed in 2005, on what had been a vacant lot. It was the first new construction in Rochester, the hub of Beaver County, in more than 50 years.

Dauphin County, International Place

International Place, which opened in 2005, comprised the renovation of five buildings and reuse of two vacant lots at Third and Chestnut streets in downtown Harrisburg. International Place comprises an expansion of International House, bringing capacity to 54 residents; Bricco, a 160-seat culinary arts school and restaurant; Ciao!, a bakery; and Olewine's Meat and Cheese House.

Delaware County, Synggy World Headquarters

In Chester, an Industrial Age power station gave way to a new world headquarters for a 21st century technology company. Software company Synggy Inc. is the anchor tenant for the former Chester Waterside Station, a coal-fired electric power plant along the Delaware River.

Fayette County, Barn at Fallingwater

The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy converted a 12,000-square-foot bank barn into conference and event space on the 5,000-acre Bear Run Nature Reserve. Completed in 2005, The Barn at Fallingwater is on Route 381 in Steward Township, adjacent to Frank Lloyd Wright's renowned Fallingwater.

Montgomery County, Pottstown Town Center

In 2000, the borough demonstrated its faith in the community by locating its new three-story, 28,000-square-foot municipal building in downtown Pottstown. Borough Hall is credited with sparking economic development, including renovation of a neighboring former bank building. The Town Center was completed in 2002 with the opening of Smith Family Plaza, which created a place for socializing, festivals and performances.

Philadelphia, Blau-Thompson residence

Completed in 2003, this project involved the renovation of a 19th-century row home in the Italian Market area of Philadelphia. The owners converted a former luncheonette with two apartments above it into a single-family home. They operate a small architectural firm from the property.

Philadelphia, School District of Philadelphia headquarters

Built in 1928 as the Philadelphia Inquirer's printing plant, the five-story building tells a different story today. The 865,000-square-foot concrete structure at 440 N. Broad St. required massive interior and exterior renovations for its rebirth as the school district's headquarters. By consolidating four administrative and storage sites into this building, the school district saves \$1.2 million in yearly operating expenses.

Philadelphia, Spring Arts Point

The three acres at North 10th and Green streets, in the West Poplar neighborhood, had been vacant since a failed urban renewal effort in the 1960s. This spring, construction began for Spring Arts Point, which will result in 53 townhouses and 20 condominiums that are expected to attract a range of income groups and family sizes.

York County, Historic Fairmount Neighborhood

The Fairmount neighborhood had been neglected for years when, in 1997, the city of York sponsored a reinvestment effort. Nearly a decade later, Historic Fairmount can point to the rehabilitation of 15 formerly single-family Victorian-era homes into 38 apartment homes serving low- and moderate-income residents. The homes encompass 37,724 square feet on two blocks of North Beaver Street.

York County, The Greenway Tech Centre

The 60,000-square-foot building at 540 S. George St., York, which used to be a cigar factory, has risen from its ashes to become a southern gateway to the city. It is part of the nonprofit Crispus Attucks Association's 10-year Boundary Avenue project to revitalize the neighborhood. The center will accommodate as many as eight loft-style offices equipped with fiber-optic cable and wireless Internet.

10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania (www.10000friends.org) is an alliance of organizations and individuals from across the state committed to land-use policies and actions that will enable Pennsylvania to strengthen its diverse urban, suburban and rural communities and reduce sprawl. 10,000 Friends has offices in Philadelphia, Harrisburg and Pittsburgh.

###