



News for Immediate Release

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Updated Visitors Center to Open at Washington Crossing Park

Harrisburg – The Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission (PHMC) in partnership with the Friends of Washington Crossing Park (FWCP) will host a grand opening ceremony at the newly renovated Washington Crossing Visitor Center at 1:30 p.m., on Sunday, March 10.

The opening coincides with PHMC's annual Charter Day celebration when many state-owned historic sites and museums are open free of charge.

Charter Day commemorates the day England's King Charles II granted the land that is now Pennsylvania to founder William Penn (1644–1718) in 1681. The Penn Charter is sometimes referred to as the state's "birth certificate."

The visitor's center re-opening comes after years of planning and construction. A modern, more energy-efficient building will now welcome visitors to the historic site along the Delaware River in Bucks County.

The renovation, which represents a \$5 million investment by the state, includes additional space for programs, exhibits and upgraded visitor amenities.

A temporary exhibit will feature items on loan from institutions with missions similar to Washington Crossing. They include:

- The letter that Gen. George Washington wrote to Col. John Cadwalader from the McConkey Ferry on Dec. 25, 1776 from the Historical Society of Pennsylvania;
- Muskets, pistols and other American, Hessian, British and French military accoutrement from the American Revolution Center;
- The sign by Edward Hicks that hung on the Pennsylvania side of the Washington Crossing (formerly Taylorsville) bridge that was flooded in 1841 from the Mercer Museum.

The opening also marks the return of two cannons from the park's collection that were moved to temporary storage in Harrisburg during the renovation.

Washington Crossing Park commemorates Gen. George Washington leading his demoralized, ill-equipped troops across the icy river to make a surprise attack on Hessian troops at Trenton, N.J., in December 1776. The victory reinvigorated American forces.

The park is one of 25 historic sites and museums on the Pennsylvania Trails of History®, is administered by PHMC in partnership with the Friends of Washington Crossing Park.

PHMC is the official history agency of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Visit online at www.phmc.state.pa.us.

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