LACKAWANNA HERITAGE VALLEY TO HOLD RIBBON CUTTING & GRAND OPENING FOR NEW SECTION OF LACKAWANNA RIVER HERITAGE TRAIL

Scranton, PA (July 16, 2013) – The Lackawanna Heritage Valley National and State Heritage Area will conduct a ribbon cutting and grand opening of the newest stretch of the Lackawanna River Heritage Trail connecting Elm Street in the City of Scranton to the Keyser Creek in the Borough of Taylor. The event will take place on Friday, July 26, 2013, at 11 AM at the newly constructed Amphitheatre that is located near the Taylor end of the trail. Parking will be available at the South Side Complex next to the Broadway Street trailhead. The County of Lackawanna Transit System (COLTS) will provide transportation to shuttle guests to the dedication beginning at 10:15 AM from the Broadway trailhead. Trail users who prefer to walk or bike to the site are welcome to do so!

Known as the CNJ Extension, named for the former rail line that ran through there, this new two mile section is a dual surface trail, offering walkers, runners and bikers the option of a paved or stone dust path to follow. Located near the South Side Shopping Center, the additional two miles create a contiguous four mile trail from the Downtown Scranton Riverwalk at Olive Street to the 7th Avenue, Broadway and Elm Street trailheads and now to the Keyser Creek in Taylor. The final leg of the first annual Scranton Half Marathon will be held on this section on April 6, 2014.

The Lackawanna Heritage Valley is developing this trail not only for recreation and transportation, but also to interpret the historic and cultural life of the region. According to Dr. Gere Reisinger, a Luzerne County resident and representative of the Seneca Nation, this section was an important stop for Native American tribes on their journeys along the Lackawanna River. Hundreds of years later, these waters remain a popular site for fishermen. Bald eagles and ospreys fly overhead regularly, competing with local fishermen for the trophy trout that thrive there.

Local artist and PennDOT consultant Tom Austin has created several unique works of art that depict the Native American heritage of the region. When Mr. Austin discovered a red oak tree that was to have been cut down, he used his talents to carve a large statue of a Native American chief. Nearby he also created numerous rock carvings representing Native American heritage, as well as flower planters filled with lilies and other lovely species. Mr. Austin has devoted more than 800 hours to creating these fascinating artifacts. Dr. Reisinger has erected a tepee nearby a garden of herbs that would have been used by the Native Americans who fished in the river.

The Lackawanna River Heritage Trail runs 40 miles along the Lackawanna River, beginning at the confluence with the Susquehanna in Pittston, joining the Delaware and Hudson (D&H) trail in Simpson, and continuing to Union Dale at the Stillwater Dam. From there, the trail extends north to the New York State border to complete the 70 mile trail system. The Heritage Trail is a wonderful community asset, used by thousands of people throughout the year for health and wellness, recreation, alternative transportation, access to the river and simple enjoyment of the area’s natural beauty.

The Mission of the Lackawanna Heritage Valley National and State Heritage Area is to facilitate community action in the preservation, promotion and development of the region’s history, cultural heritage and natural resources. For general information about the heritage area, visit www.LHVA.org.

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