



PRESS RELEASE

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AmeriServ Financial celebrates 10th anniversary as title sponsor of AmeriServ Johnstown FolkFest

JOHNSTOWN, Pa. – In 1996, Pokemon was released, the Internet was catching on, 15-year-old Martina Hingis became the youngest person in history to win Wimbledon – and AmeriServ Financial became the title sponsor of a young festival then called the Johnstown FolkFest. This year Johnstown Area Heritage Association (JAHA) and AmeriServ are celebrating the 10th anniversary of the bank’s title sponsorship of the AmeriServ Financial Johnstown FolkFest.

“The AmeriServ Johnstown FolkFest is a free festival, which simply wouldn’t be possible without the support of our sponsors – and I think our community can appreciate that,” said Ron Carnevali, festival chair. “AmeriServ has been instrumental in the festival’s growth and success from the beginning. The Johnstown Area Heritage Association is deeply grateful for their ongoing commitment and support to us and to the entire community.”

As is tradition, the 2006 festival is scheduled for the Friday, Saturday and Sunday of Labor Day weekend, which is Sept. 1, 2 and 3. Major acts for this year’s festival include Sleepy LaBeef, a rockabilly legend; Balkan Beat Box, an exotic band that blends Balkan brass, turntables and percussion; zydeco favorite Terrance Simien & the Zydeco Experience; and Bonerama, a New Orleans instrumental funk band.

“FolkFest is always an exciting time of the year for our community,” said AmeriServ Senior Vice President Dan Hummel. “It’s fun to watch the excitement building up to Labor Day weekend and to be part of it all. It’s positive energy like this that makes our community come alive for visitors and everyone who lives here.”

Through their title sponsorship, AmeriServ supports the festival financially and with volunteers. The bank's in-kind donations include printing a variety of festival collateral, including scrip; marketing expertise; and help in promoting the festival through billboards, statement stuffers and lobby decorations. AmeriServ employees and their families volunteer during the festival to help with such tasks as selling scrip, counting scrip and bookkeeping. In fact, more than 180 AmeriServ employees volunteered during the 2005 festival.

To mark the 10th anniversary of AmeriServ's title sponsorship, JAHA is unveiling a new festival logo. The new logo is designed in the style of vintage letterpress printing, and reflects the festival's programming of American roots music.

"We think the logo does a great job of visually expressing the level of AmeriServ's commitment to the festival. The style and flag image also represents the festival's emphasis on Americana music of all kinds – from blues all the way to zydeco," Carnevali said.

The festival began in 1990 when the Johnstown Area Heritage Association (JAHA) successfully persuaded the National Folk Festival to come to Johnstown. The National Folk Festival stayed in Johnstown for three years, and then went to another American city. JAHA began to produce a music festival on its own in 1994, with the late blues legend Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown as headliner. In 1995, AmeriServ became a major sponsor for the festival, before becoming the title sponsor in 1996.

"AmeriServ Financial is a community bank, and the FolkFest brings the community together for three days of free family entertainment," said Hummel. "It represents the best our community has to offer."

The AmeriServ Johnstown FolkFest has developed a national reputation for the quality of its programming, and this year was one of just 32 festivals selected by the Pennsylvania Tourism Office to take part in a festival marketing initiative. As a part of this initiative, the FolkFest is featured on the state's tourism website, visitpa.com.

The festival's audience has grown far beyond the immediate Johnstown area. Local hotels are close to capacity over the weekend, and many people make daytrips to the festival from nearby cities such as Pittsburgh and State College. Labor Day has become a popular weekend for houseguests as well -- survey data indicates that many people who have ties to Johnstown but live elsewhere visit over Labor Day in order to attend FolkFest.

For more information about the AmeriServ Johnstown FolkFest, visit www.jaha.org; for more information about AmeriServ Financial, visit www.ameriservfinancial.com.

The AmeriServ Johnstown FolkFest began in 1990 when the Johnstown Area Heritage Association persuaded the National Folk Festival to come to Johnstown. The National Folk Festival stayed for two additional years before moving on to another American city, at which point JAHA began to produce the event. The outdoor festival continues to present more than 70 hours of free music each year over Labor Day weekend. For more information about the AmeriServ Johnstown FolkFest, visit JAHA's Web site at www.jaha.org. JAHA, a non-profit, membership-based organization, also owns and operates the Johnstown Flood Museum, Frank & Sylvia Pasquerilla Heritage Discovery Center and the Wagner-Ritter House & Garden. A Children's Discovery Museum is being planned. In addition to the AmeriServ Johnstown FolkFest, JAHA produces a variety of cultural programs throughout the year, including 1889 flood commemorative events, lectures, a fundraising Gala and other events.

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