

PRESS RELEASE

For more information, please contact:
Shelley Johansson, Marketing Manager
Johnstown Area Heritage Association
P. O. Box 1889
Johnstown, PA 15907
(814) 539-1889 x 308
sjohansson@jaha.org

JAHA announces receipt of Challenge Grant from Kresge Foundation

JOHNSTOWN, Pa. (Oct. 11, 2007) – The Johnstown Area Heritage Association (JAHA) today announced receipt of a Challenge Grant of \$500,000 from the trustees of The Kresge Foundation in Troy, Michigan. The grant is among the most prestigious awarded to non-profit organizations nationally and internationally.

In a communication informing JAHA that it had been selected for a Challenge Grant, Kresge President and Chief Executive Officer Rip Rapson said, “A capital campaign offers a strategic opportunity for an organization to connect with its stakeholders and reach out to new donors, volunteers, participants and the general community. You (JAHA) presented a compelling strategy to use a Kresge Challenge Grant to help leverage support from new donors and to solicit higher levels of giving from past contributors. Your plan to retain these new and increased donors after your campaign concludes will strengthen your organization’s private base of support for annual operating and program needs in the future.”

The grant is intended to challenge JAHA to raise the balanced required to complete its campaign goal of \$8,050,000 and to fund the campaign projects. The highly competitive award increases the total raised in the campaign to just under \$7 million, or 87% of the goal. Projects included in the “Preserving Our Heritage: Revitalizing Our Community” campaign include renovation of the Johnstown Heritage Discovery Center to include a new Children’s Museum, featuring interactive exhibits; an Education Center and a “Mystery of Steel” Theater; as well as the renovation of the Flood Museum; and completion of the Phase I development of Festival Park.

Rapson said that “the Association’s exciting plans to create the Johnstown Discovery Network support an ambitious vision for increasing cultural tourism in your region. We are pleased to support your organization and the strategic opportunity presented by your capital campaign to expand your private donor base.”

Ronald Carnevali, president of JAHA's Board and campaign co-chair, called the Kresge Challenge Grant a "stamp of approval for the vision and planning of the Association and a vote of confidence in the community's commitment to respond to this challenge. Completion of these community projects will have a very positive effect not only on the City's preservation and revitalization, but in the way residents see their hometown," he said.

Fellow campaign co-chair Mark Pasquerilla reported that a total of six Kresge Challenge Grants were awarded to non-profit organizations in Pennsylvania. He added that "only Washington & Jefferson College in Washington, Pa., and the Zoological Society of Philadelphia received larger grants than JAHA. That serves as testimony to the great potential that the Foundation finds in the projects included in the campaign," he said. The Kresge Foundation also funded the JAHA capital campaign that ended in 2000.

The Johnstown Children's Museum will be the first of the new Johnstown Discovery Network's attractions to open, most likely in early 2008. The other Heritage Center attractions will open through the remainder of 2008, and the Festival Park and Johnstown Flood Museum are expected to be completed in 2009.

Richard Burkert noted that Kresge's support of the campaign "sends a signal to first-time prospects to support this drive, to past donors to increase their support and to organizations outside the area to participate." Burkert pointed to contributions totaling almost \$800,000 from the Richard King Mellon Foundation, the Robert Waters Trust and the Hillman Foundation as examples of major foundations headquartered in Pittsburgh who have generously supported the campaign.

The Kresge Foundation is a private, national foundation established in 1924 by Sebastian S. Kresge to promote human progress. In 2006, it awarded approximately \$150 million in grants to nonprofit organizations in the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, South Africa and Mexico and had year-end assets of \$3.3 billion. The foundation is headquartered in Michigan.

The Johnstown Area Heritage Association is a non-profit, membership-based organization dedicated to preserving and showcasing Johnstown's unique history to the nation through high-quality educational, cultural and recreational experiences. In addition to the Johnstown Flood Museum, the Frank & Sylvia Pasquerilla Heritage Discovery Center, and the Wagner-Ritter House & Garden, JAHA produces the AmeriServ Johnstown FolkFest, a 3-day free music festival held annually over Labor Day weekend; flood commemoration events; and a wide variety of additional cultural programming. The Johnstown Children's Museum is currently under construction and will open in 2008. For more information on JAHA programs, museums and events, visit www.jaha.org.