

PRESS RELEASE

For more information, please contact:
Shelley Johansson, Director of Communications
Johnstown Area Heritage Association
P. O. Box 1889
Johnstown, PA 15907
814-539-1889 x308
sjohansson@jaha.org

Johnstown passenger station donated to JAHA

***Historically significant station to become part of
Johnstown Discovery Network***

(JOHNSTOWN, Pa.) – The Johnstown Area Heritage Association today announced that it has received a donation of the Johnstown passenger station from the SFB Corp., which is owned jointly by Johnstown natives Harvey and Katherine Supowitz and Carole Furst Gigliotti.

Plans for the station include its use as a major link and visitors center for the rapidly expanding Johnstown Discovery Network, and as an attractive venue in the development of Festival Park and other community uses. It will continue to serve as an Amtrak train station.

“There are so many factors that make the station a wonderful visitors center for the newly-created Johnstown Discovery Network,” said Richard Burkert, JAHA president. “It is a beautiful building of historic significance, and the location works very well with the existing attractions included in the Johnstown Discovery Network. It’s also ideally placed to complement the Stone Bridge lighting project, and the future development of the Blacksmith Shop.”

“The train station is an integral part of Johnstown history and heritage, and the SFB partners believe that giving the building to JAHA for the benefit of visitors will ensure its long-term legacy,” said the SFB partners in a statement. “We are pleased to assist in developing the Johnstown Discovery Network.”

The donation also includes the station’s parking lot and the area up to the Borco building.

The Johnstown train station was suggested as a visitors center in the 1991 planning document, “Johnstown Heritage Development Plan,” that outlined the framework of the Johnstown Discovery Network. The network, which includes the Johnstown Flood Museum, Heritage Discovery Center, Wagner-Ritter House & Garden, and Inclined Plane, was expanded in 2009 when the Johnstown Children’s Museum and “Mystery of Steel” film presentation premiered.

Currently, JAHA is working to enlarge and market the Johnstown Discovery Network as a complete visitor experience, encouraging visitors to spend more time and see all the attractions.

“As we planned the Johnstown Discovery Network over the years, we visualized the station as an ideal visitors center at the network’s hub,” Burkert said. “We are currently pursuing the possibility of providing a shuttle joining all of the immediate area sites. Eventually, we would like to find a possible transportation link to more area sites such as the Johnstown National Flood Memorial.”

JAHA worked with the Johnstown Redevelopment Authority to coordinate a \$330,000 restoration of the station in 1996. The goals of that effort were to rehabilitate the ceiling and walls of the concourse; install new lights in the waiting room; move the ticket office and other Amtrak functions to a new area with separate utilities; and install an exhibit that orients visitors to Johnstown and the surrounding region. Funding for those improvements was obtained through the National Park Service, DCNR, and a federal Transportation Enhancements grant.

The station was built in 1915-1916 to meet Johnstown’s increasing needs as an important freight and passenger stop on the main line of the Pennsylvania Railroad. The station was designed by famed architect Kenneth Murchison (1872-1938), who is famous for his train station designs – other Murchison stations are Baltimore’s Union Station, and others in Hoboken, N.J. and Scranton, Pa. Like most of Murchison’s designs, the Johnstown station is Beaux Arts with Neoclassical elements.

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The Johnstown Discovery Network

The Johnstown Flood Museum
Frank & Sylvia Pasquerilla Heritage Discovery Center
Johnstown Children’s Museum
Mystery of Steel Theater & Exhibit
Education Center
Ethnic Social Club
Galliker’s Café
James V. Saly Courtyard
Wagner-Ritter House & Garden
Festival Park
Johnstown Flood National Memorial*
Inclined Plane*
The Stone Bridge*
The Cambria Iron Works Blacksmith Shop*
The Johnstown Train Station

(*denotes a part of the Johnstown Discovery Center that is not owned and operated by JAHA.)

The Johnstown Area Heritage Association is a non-profit, membership-based organization dedicated to preserving and presenting Johnstown’s unique history to the nation through high-quality educational, cultural and recreational experiences. It owns and operates several museums in the Johnstown Discovery Network,

including the Johnstown Flood Museum, the Frank & Sylvia Pasquerilla Heritage Discovery Center, Wagner-Ritter House & Garden, and Johnstown Children's Museum. JAHA also programs regular workshops and other events for children, cultural presentations for adults, and other special events, including the AmeriServ Flood City Music Festival and the First Commonwealth Johnstown Film Festival. For more information on JAHA programs, museums and events, visit www.jaha.org.