2010 Commonwealth Awards Honor ‘Smart Growth’ Projects and Contributing Individuals Across Pennsylvania

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Harrisburg, May, 2010 – Ten Pennsylvania projects and the firms, government agencies, and civic groups responsible for their completion received 2010 Commonwealth Awards following their selection by a four-member panel formed by 10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania. Judged for their contributions to the economic and environmental quality of life in the state, the naming of the recipients -- chosen from 29 project submissions-- was the highlight of 10,000 Friends’ recent annual presentation ceremony. Four winners were recognized in the design competition’s Gold category, two in the Silver, while four others were cited for their Bronze level of achievement. (A complete listing of this year’s outstanding projects and their submitting organizations is included at the close of this release).

Pam Coleman, Manager of the Souderton-Telford Main Streets, submitted an historical preservation commercial project, the Marketplace at Telford Station, which was one of the awardees-- “The Commonwealth Award is such an honor. Locally, it helps remind our community of how much impact this project has had in transforming abandoned buildings into a great destination for the entire region. It is easy to forget what this blighted site looked like before—but now children play in the fountain while enjoying an ice cream cone. Our local officials and volunteers are so proud to be recognized for their commitment to this transformational project.” Cecil Baker, of Cecil Baker + Partners, had the honor of submitting two of this year’s awardees. Mr. Baker reflected on having both Western Union, an adaptive reuse mixed use project in Philadelphia, and Marie Lederer Senior Center, an affordable senior citizen housing development also in Philadelphia, honored: “The 10,000 Friends Commonwealth Awards recognize entities and individuals for their transformative contributions to their
communities. This award gives them tangible proof that their quixotic efforts are recognized by professionals who assess the impact their plans have when executed and built, and place honored projects as a beacon for Smart Growth development in that context."

The ceremony also honored three individuals for their career contributions to improving quality of life in the Commonwealth. In an emotional highlight of the program, a private citizen, Jonathon Schmidt, was honored posthumously for his role in the Southeastern Pennsylvania First Suburbs Project. Also, John Milius, a former township supervisor of Cranberry Township, Butler County, was cited for his service advancing municipal planning as a public official. And 10,000 Friends presented its “Friend of Pennsylvania Award” to Allen Biehler of Allegheny County, currently the state’s Secretary of Transportation, for his work in securing $60 million in funding for Smart Growth “Pennsylvania Community Transportation Initiative.”

Also, representatives of PNC Bank chose the occasion to present two awards for contributions to public and affordable housing. The financial giant’s “Opportunity for All Award,” for projects increasing affordable housing, was given to the Century Building in Pittsburgh – also a winner in the Commonwealth Awards’ Gold category. The “PNC Leading the Way Award,” recognizing outstanding accomplishments of people and agencies involved in public housing, went to The Alliance for Building Communities, an organization serving the Lehigh Valley.

The evening’s keynote speaker was John Fry. President of Franklin & Marshall College and president-elect of Drexel University, Mr. Fry has been a long-term proponent of engaging higher educational institutions and their host communities to work cooperatively together to build facilities and student programs to benefit the entire community, and also of recognizing the importance of creating “full-service” communities where residents can live, work, learn, and play.

The design award winners were chosen by a four-member panel headed by Don Carter, the David Lewis Director of Urban Design and Regional Engagement at the Remaking Cities Institute of the Carnegie Mellon University School of Architecture. His fellow panel members were Henry S. Beukema, Executive Director of the McCune Foundation; Margaret M. Conner,
principal, Urban Design Associates; and Vivian Loftness FAIA, LEED A, and professor of the Carnegie Mellon University School of Architecture. Submissions for the event’s individual awards were juried by Fred Reddig, Executive Director of the Governor’s Center for Local Government Services, Danielle Spila, Director of the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation Policy Office, and Cindy Dunn, Deputy Secretary for Conservation and Technical Services for the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

Four Gold awards for design were given to:

- Gold Award - The Century Building, Pittsburgh, submitted by Trek Development (also winner of the PNC Opportunity for All Award)
- Gold Award - CODO 241, York, submitted by Murphy & Dittenhafer Architects
- Gold Award - Marie Lederer Senior Center, Philadelphia, submitted by Cecil Baker + Partners
- Gold Award - University Corners/Elevations Lofts on Main, Wilkes-Barre, submitted by Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Business and Industry

Two Silver Awards for design were given to:

- Silver Award - Market at Fifth, Pittsburgh, submitted by the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation
- Silver Award - Harrisburg University for Science and Technology, Harrisburg, submitted by Burt Hill, Inc.

Four Bronze Awards for design were given to:

- Bronze Award - Mantua Square, Philadelphia, submitted by Philadelphia Housing Authority
- Bronze Award - Marketplace at Telford Station, Souderton-Telford, submitted by Souderton-Telford Main Streets
- Bronze Award - Overlook Park, Allentown, submitted by Wallace, Roberts & Todd, LLC
- Bronze Award - Western Union, Philadelphia, submitted by Cecil Baker + Partners

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10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania, which has offices in Harrisburg, Pittsburgh, and Philadelphia, is the leading statewide voice for creating distinctive, great places to live and work. 10,000 Friends works with citizens, organizations, and public officials to create land use, infrastructure, and governance policies and practices that protect our resources, enhance our quality of life, and strengthen our economy.