Harrisburg – 10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania will bestow its prestigious Commonwealth Awards for Design to a Lancaster County developer who is creating a walkable community with nearly 500 new residences and a commercial district in the Borough of Mount Joy while preserving nine acres of open space.

The award was presented to Lancaster–based Charter Homes for its Florin Hill development at a special awards ceremony held Tuesday afternoon, June 9, at the Whitaker Center in Harrisburg.

The Florin Hill development, still under construction in the western end of Mount Joy, will bring 483 residential units that will connect with the borough’s Main Street, allowing residents to walk or bicycle to existing and newly opened stores.

“We are very pleased by the quality of design award winners in this year’s program”, remarked Judy Schwank, President and CEO of 10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania. “The projects represent a variety of uses from residential housing and public parks to educational, government and transportation, but all of them represent the very best examples of smart growth principles at work in the commonwealth. We congratulate all of the entrants in the Commonwealth Awards for leading the way with innovative design.”

The design award winners were chosen by a five-member panel of outside experts headed by Gary Hack, a nationally recognized urban designer and a professor at the University of Pennsylvania.

Charter Homes’ Florin Hill development was chosen as the top design winner for its unique plan which preserved nine acres as a common area with natural wetlands yet still achieved a density of eight residential units for each acre developed. The residences include a mix of single family homes, townhouses and apartments.

All $100 million for construction of the 483 units is privately financed and about half the units have already been sold. The development incorporates an “old town” look by locating nearly all the garages in the new residences in the rear of properties accessed by alley ways.
The president of Charter homes is Robert P. Bowman. The firm has numerous developments underway in Lancaster, York, Dauphin and Cumberland counties in south-central Pennsylvania. Its website devotes considerable space to historical facts about each county and the region.

While Charter Homes took the top prize, three silver awards for design were given to:

- The revitalization of Schenley Plaza in Pittsburgh sponsored by the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy
- The Philadelphia Museum of Art for its landscaped parking facility and sculpture garden by Pennoni Associates
- The Pocono Environmental Education/Visitor Center located in Dingmans Ferry in Pike County by the architectural firm of Bohlin Cynwinski Jackson.

Seven other design winners received bronze awards:

- The York County Administrative Center for county government designed by NuTec Design Associates.
- Traymore, a planned residential Greenfield project, located in Rose Valley Borough outside Philadelphia by Andy Detterline and Associates.
- Ludlow Scattered Sites HOPE VI Redevelopment and Nellie Reynolds Gardens, a mixed use development in North Philadelphia, from the Philadelphia Housing Authority.
- The Market Street Elevated Subway Stations, a mass transit facility in West Philadelphia, designed by UCI Architects, Inc.
- Turbo Lofts at the Village at West Main, a mixed use development, in Lansdale, Montgomery County, by Moulton Builders, Inc.
- The Fred Rogers Center for Early Learning and Children’s Media located in Latrobe, Westmoreland County, by FortyEight Architecture.
- The Duquesne University Power Center, a mixed use facility in Pittsburgh from Jendoco Construction Corporation.

Gary Hack, who chaired the Design Awards selection committee, is a former dean of the School of Design at the University of Pennsylvania. He has prepared plans for more than 30 cities in the United States and abroad. Also on the jury are Tom Murphy, the former mayor of Pittsburgh who is now a senior fellow with the Washington-based Urban Land Institute; Donald Carter, president of Pittsburgh-based Urban Design Associates and Caren Glotfelty and Brian Hill, program directors respectively for the Heinz Foundation and the Richard King Mellon Foundation, both based in Pittsburgh.

Keynote speaker for the awards ceremony is Christopher B. Leinberger, an expert on land use strategy and development whose multi-layered career includes experience as a business executive, professor and author. He is a frequent nationwide speaker, author of magazine articles, book chapters and books and currently he is a visiting fellow at the Brookings Institute in Washington, D.C. Leinberger has an international reputation as a
promoter of transforming both urban and suburban downtowns into examples of “walkable urbanism.”

10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania, which has offices in Harrisburg, Pittsburgh and Philadelphia, is the leading statewide voice for 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 and strengthen our economy.