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October 5, 2011

Officials Mark Kickoff of Second Phase of Yorklyn Revitalization Project

YORKLYN – DNREC's Division of Parks & Recreation kicked off the second phase of a project designed to revitalize the town of Yorklyn in the northwest corner of the state into a vibrant, lively and scenic centerpiece while still retaining its mill town roots.



Plans are moving forward after a public-private partnership was established to map out the future of the town. Today, Governor Jack Markell, DNREC Secretary Collin O'Mara and numerous other officials were on hand as DNREC hosted a groundbreaking event to mark the end of Phase 1 and the beginning of Phase 2 of the project, the Auburn Valley Master Plan. The project is expected to boost economic development and ecological restoration in the scenic area, and add to state parkland at the Auburn Heights Preserve located in the Red Clay Valley near the Pennsylvania state line.

"What you see here is the beginning of a new era in Yorklyn. It also represents the best example of how the state can work with private and public partners to build something truly special that benefits everyone in the community," said Governor Jack Markell. "This project will be unique in its aesthetics and make Yorklyn a shining historic treasure for Delaware tourism."

At the event, officials acknowledged completion of the \$1.6-million, FEMA-funded demolition of the corporate headquarters of the former NVF manufacturing plant and zinc treatment facility, and began the demolition project for the main plant – making way for the unique redevelopment site that will include historic buildings, wetlands, flood mitigation areas and multi-use trails.

"This is one of the most complex public-private projects in the nation that transforms a shuttered site into a model of preservation, and redevelopment that will bring economic opportunity and prosperity to the area," said DNREC Secretary Collin O'Mara. "The site is undergoing an environmental cleanup of nearly a century of historic contamination, as well as a stream restoration project that will not only improve water quality and protect fish in the Red Clay Creek, but will also reduce the severe flooding that has resulted in significant economic impacts to Yorklyn. With the beautiful, historic setting of Yorklyn as a backdrop, we believe the synergy created by the master plan - which includes a trail, an antique car loop, and steam railroad – will make this a uniquely Delaware destination."

The goal of the public-private partnership is to reclaim the former mill town by cleaning up contaminated areas, restoring floodplains and expanding on tourism-drawing development. Not only does the plan call for shopping and restaurant development, but also a trail system that will connect the new commercial sites with historic and natural areas, in addition to connecting to existing attractions like the Marshall Steam Museum and the Delaware Nature Society.

The partnership is made up of private developers, neighboring organizations, and several divisions of DNREC, including the Division of Parks and Recreation, the Division of Waste and Hazardous

Substances' Site Investigation and Restoration Section, and the Division of Water. Partners outside DNREC include the Delaware Economic Development Office, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the court-appointed trustee for NVF, and Auburn Village LLC. The project was further bolstered by strong support from neighboring property owners, as well as conservation and recreational organizations in the Yorklyn area.

The Auburn Heights Preserve, part of the Delaware State Parks system, is home to the historic Marshall estate, which is managed through a partnership between Delaware State Parks and the Friends of Auburn Heights Preserve. The Friends group owns a world-class collection of operating vintage steam cars, including 14 Stanley Steamers and the miniature Auburn Valley Railroad.

The NVF Company produced vulcanized fiber and related products in Yorklyn until declaring bankruptcy in April 2009.

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