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Officials mark kickoff of second phase of Yorklyn revitalization project

YORKLYN (Oct. 5, 2011) – 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, 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 health 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 NYNEX manufacturing plant and zinc treatment facility, and began the demolition project for the main plant – making way for the unique redevelopment 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 the Red Clay Creek, but will also reduce the severe flooding that has resulted in significant economic impacts to Yorklyn. With the beautiful 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 train - 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 tourism-drawing development. Not only does the plan call for shopping and restaurant development, but also a trail system that will connect commercial sites with historic and natural areas, in addition to connecting to existing attractions like the Marshall Steam Museum and the Delaware Nature Society.

