

## NEWS

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### **Lancaster County Convention Center and Lancaster Marriott at Penn Square Opens with Unrivaled Features**

**Lancaster, Pa. (June 24, 2009)** – Operators of the Lancaster County Convention Center and Lancaster Marriott at Penn Square are pleased to announce that the uniquely integrated facility is open for business after just less than two years of construction. The landmark \$177-million facility, anchoring historic Penn Square in Downtown Lancaster, Pa., boldly incorporates the 110-year-old *Beaux Arts* façade of the former Watt & Shand Department Store. The convention center and 299-room hotel will offer a combined 90,000 square feet of meeting space and the latest technology for conventions, events, and trade shows.

Appealing as a world-class facility set in a smaller, less expensive urban destination, the facility is centrally located to Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Baltimore, Washington, D.C. and New York. The venue offers space for groups up to 5,000 and includes a convention and exhibition hall, two grand ballrooms, and finely appointed meeting and board rooms.

“We are seeing tremendous interest in the Lancaster County Convention Center as the go-to place among meeting planners looking to bring their events to Pennsylvania,” said Joshua Nowak, Director of Sales & Marketing for Interstate Hotels & Resorts, the management company for the facility.

#### **Presenting the compelling historical importance of its region**

Paying remarkable homage to regional and American history, the facility incorporates historic structures and narratives within and around its own new architecture. The venue offers significant historical and cultural context, including being a key site of Pennsylvania’s Quest for Freedom trail, which honors the sites and stories of the African American journey to freedom from the time of the Underground Railroad and Civil War to the present day. Eventually the overall project, which from inception held a vision of incorporating the unique historical fabric of Lancaster, will offer a 20,000-square-foot, \$20-million interactive museum, the Stevens & Smith Historic Site (see [www.stevensandsmith.org](http://www.stevensandsmith.org) for additional background).

Under the leadership of the Historic Preservation Trust of Lancaster County (HPT), a water-collection cistern was unearthed and preserved during construction that had once been part of the Kleiss Tavern owned by influential Congressman and abolitionist Thaddeus Stevens. In the Vine Street entrance area to

the facility, guests will behold a view of the preserved cistern, believed by scholars and archeologists to have been a hiding place used by Stevens and business partner Lydia Hamilton Smith to assist Americans escaping slavery along the Underground Railroad.

### **Lancaster as a destination**

From bustling farmers' markets to scenic rural landscapes populated by the nation's oldest community of Old Order Amish, Lancaster offers a range of family-oriented activities and "country-life" experiences. But there's another side as well – a sophisticated urban center that offers dozens of well respected art galleries and exquisite fine dining and shopping. And as one of the largest National Historic Register Districts in the country, it offers hundreds of well preserved historical landmarks. Visiting architects and planners, in fact, have noted favorable assessments of the sense of place it offers, including that Lancaster "is the kind of place other communities are trying to create."

### **Décor and amenities**

Interiors are distinctive and exude a warm cosmopolitan feel including fresh colors and rich mahogany accents. Expansive windows offer an infusion of natural light and remarkable views onto the Downtown. The facility's new construction incorporates the iconic façade of the former Watt & Shand Department Store, as well as other important historic structures and features.

In the 299-room hotel portion of this integrated facility, meeting attendees will find all the amenities commanded by the Marriott name, including 37-inch LCD high-def screens, smart plug-and-play system for connecting laptops to TVs, and luxurious pillow-top bedding.

### **Booking information**

To book an event at the integrated facility, call Josh Nowak at 717-207-4044. For more information, visit [www.lancasterconventioncenter.com](http://www.lancasterconventioncenter.com) and [www.marriottlancaster.com](http://www.marriottlancaster.com).

### **About ownership of the integrated facility**

The Lancaster County Convention Center is a publicly owned entity under the direction of the Lancaster County Convention Center Authority; Kevin Molloy, executive director. The Lancaster Marriott at Penn Square is owned by the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Lancaster and leased to Penn Square Partners, the private company that holds the Marriott franchise.

### **About Interstate Hotels & Resorts**

Interstate Hotels & Resorts, which operates The Lancaster County Convention Center and Lancaster Marriott at Penn Square, is the nation's largest independent hotel management company. For more information about Interstate Hotels & Resorts, visit the company's Web site at [www.ihcco.com](http://www.ihcco.com).

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