



Release to Area Media

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The Grand Halle Celebrates Full Accessibility

JOHNSTOWN, PA – With the snip of a red ribbon Friday evening, the way to greater comfort was opened for mobility challenged patrons of The Grand Halle on Broad Street. For now the Grand Halle is fully accessible, thanks to a just-completed \$66,500 project that constructed new, larger restrooms and a ramp that enables everyone to get to them.

Representatives of 1901 Church; its architect, Landmarks SGA, LLC. of Somerset; the general contractor, Major Buildings, Inc. of Johnstown; and several organizations that provided funding, gathered at the Grand Halle to cut a ribbon and celebrate the successful conclusion of this project.

“Now everyone can access our new, bright and accommodating restrooms,” said Teresa Stoughton Marafino, President of the Board of Directors for 1901 Church, Inc., which owns the building. “We are very appreciative of the funding agencies who gave the grants that made this project possible.”

A lead grant of \$30,000 was provided by a foundation that chooses to remain anonymous about its gifts. The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission awarded a \$15,000 Keystone Historic Preservation Construction Grant; the Cambria County Alliance for Business and Industry gave \$11,500; The Community Foundation for the Alleghenies provided \$8,350 through its Community Initiatives Fund and Lift Johnstown gave \$1,650 – the proceeds from the 2014 Lift Johnstown Golf Open.

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In addition to the restrooms, extensive roof work was also done by the contractor. The need for a new roof was revealed by a just-concluded building assessment project by the architect – a project supported jointly by a grant from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, the National Trust for Historic Places and the Community Foundation for the Alleghenies. The assessment determined that the old roof was failing and allowing water to infiltrate the building. 1901 Church worked closely with the architect and general contractor to remediate the roof problems as part of the restroom project – so the new restrooms wouldn't be ruined by a bad roof.

“We can't thank Mike Friedhofer, the architect, and Mark Rychak of Major Builders enough for their efforts,” said Dave Hurst, Project Manager for The Steeples Project. “Both worked hard to keep the costs of this project within the limits established by the grants that we had.”

The overall result is drier and fully accessible Grand Halle on Broad Street, formerly Immaculate Conception Roman Catholic Church, which now is being used actively as a public concert hall and a special-events rental space for weddings, corporate events and other large gatherings. For more information about the Grand Halle, visit www.steepleproject.org or call (814) 536-7986.

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