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## News for Immediate Release

March 5, 2010

### **Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission Invites Residents to Celebrate the Commonwealth's 329th Birthday**

**Harrisburg** – The Historical and Museum Commission will honor Pennsylvania's 329th birthday by displaying the original Penn Charter from March 12-19 at The State Museum of Pennsylvania in Harrisburg.

The Charter, in which Britain's King Charles II granted the land that is now Pennsylvania to founder William Penn, is sometimes referred to as the state's "birth certificate." It was Penn's personal copy.

"A priceless document cared for by the State Archives, the charter possesses so much meaning to the commonwealth and its residents," said Barbara Franco, PHMC executive director. "The fragile historical parchment is exhibited in a special protective Plexiglas case with low light and temperature levels."

On Charter Day, Sunday, March 14, programming runs from noon to 4 p.m. Admission is free, including visits to the Curiosity Connection and the Planetarium.

In addition to seeing the Charter, guests can meet William Penn as portrayed by William Kushatus and hear a lecture presented by the Institute for Cultural Partnerships about researching your ancestors to find patterns of genetic disease.

Visitors can also learn about Victorian life with the Victorian Dance Ensemble and hear yarn's of bygone days as Pennsylvania Jack tells stories full of characters from the Keystone State. PHMC staff and professionals from the region's many historical societies will also be available to answer your questions.

In addition to The State Museum's programming, many sites along the Pennsylvania Trails of History® are open to the public free of charge on Sunday, March 14.

Participating sites include: Pennsbury Manor (Morrisville, Bucks County); Washington Crossing (Washington Crossing, Bucks County); Brandywine Battlefield (Chadds Ford, Chester County); Graeme Park (Horsham, Montgomery County); Landis Valley Museum (Lancaster, Lancaster County); Pennsylvania Railroad Museum (Ronks, Lancaster County); Ephrata Cloister (Ephrata, Lancaster County); Cornwall Iron Furnace (Lebanon, Lebanon County); Daniel Boone Homestead (Birdsboro, Berks County); Conrad Weiser Homestead (Womelsdorf, Berks County); Anthracite Heritage Museum (Scranton, Lackawanna County); Eckley Miners Village (Weatherly, Carbon County); Joseph Priestley House (Northumberland, Northumberland County); Pennsylvania Lumber Museum (Galeton, Potter County); Drake Well Museum (Titusville, Crawford County); and Erie Maritime Museum (Erie, Erie County).

For more information on Charter Day 2010, call (717) 772-3257 or visit the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission's web site at [www.phmc.state.pa.us](http://www.phmc.state.pa.us).

The State Museum of Pennsylvania, located at 300 North Street, Harrisburg, is one of 25 historic sites and museums on the Pennsylvania Trails of History® administered by the Historical and Museum Commission.

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