

NEWS RELEASE

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Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission

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**PENNSYLVANIA CONCLUDES YEAR-LONG RECOGNITION OF
75TH ANNIVERSARY OF ROOSEVELT'S 'NEW DEAL'**

Special Exhibition Runs Nov. 22 - May 17; Symposium Dec. 4 at State Museum

Harrisburg, PA –Seventy-five years after it helped lift the nation out of the Great Depression, the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission will conclude its year-long observance of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal with a special exhibition that will open on Nov. 22 and run through May 17. The exhibit, "A Common Canvas: Pennsylvania's New Deal Post Office Murals," will feature guided tours and gallery walks at The State Museum in Harrisburg, as well as evocative murals and art works commissioned by the U.S. Treasury Department between 1933 and 1942. The murals and art were widely dispersed throughout Pennsylvania in local postal facilities.

"These engaging pieces offer a unique glimpse into a 'lost' Pennsylvania and represent a treasure trove of public art and a vivid portrait of Pennsylvania society and culture during the Great Depression," said Barbara Franco, executive director of the PHMC. "Each piece was created to capture something intrinsically important about the Pennsylvania community where they were to be installed."

Given the commonwealth's legacy as a manufacturing state, Franco said, industries such as coal and steel are recurring motifs, but the collection also reflects other traditions and industries like agriculture, glass making, lumbering, historical events and individuals, Native Americans, and a variety of town and streetscapes.

"Collectively, the murals and related works represent Pennsylvania's largest public art project," she said.

A public history symposium will be held from 1:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Dec. 4 in The State Museum in Harrisburg. The keynote address will be given by Dr. Christopher Breiseth, president and CEO of the Franklin

and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute, Hyde Park, NY. The symposium is entitled, “The Legacy of the New Deal.”

Other speakers will give presentations on the following topics:

- David Lembeck, historian and author -- Pennsylvania’s Public Art Collection: New Deal Post Office Mural Art and Artists;
- Debbie Walter, Johnstown Redevelopment Authority, and Mary Borkow, Johnstown citizen activist -- Preserving a New Deal Public Venue: The Roxbury Bandshell in Johnstown;
- Dan Cupper, historian and author -- Pennsylvania’s Prevalent New Deal Public Works Project: The Pennsylvania Turnpike; and
- Linda Ries, Pennsylvania State Archives -- Archival Films from the New Deal Era: The Pennsylvania Turnpike and Managing Forestry Resources.

Galley talks and exhibit tours will be scheduled through March 8.

Joining the commission in co-sponsoring the celebration are the PA Humanities Council Preservation Pennsylvania, American Institute of Architects – Pennsylvania Chapter, PA Federation of Museums and Historical Organizations, PA Historical Association, Penn State University American Studies program, Middle Atlantic American Studies Association, and the Pennsylvania Heritage Society.

A Common Canvas is also supported, in part, by the Auchincloss Family Fund on behalf of Mr. and Mrs. S. Sloan Auchincloss and the Shearer Family Fund on behalf of R. Scott and Kathy T. Shearer, both of which are part of the Foundation for Enhancing Communities.

For additional information, visit www.statemuseumpa.org.