

VOICE OF THE VALLEY ARTICLE SEPTEMBER 2008, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Beginning this fall, the Borough of Danville and the Danville Business Alliance will collaborate with the Hamer Center for Community Design at Pennsylvania State University (Penn State) to initiate a study of the Danville central business district that will result in a master plan for the downtown area. The study will serve two purposes. First, it will be an opportunity for senior students in the PSU Department of Landscape Architecture to gain real world technical experience before they graduate. Second, and importantly to the citizens of Danville, it will be a participatory, cost-effective way for the community to develop a sustainable plan for development and revitalization with the assistance of an internationally renowned academic program.

The Hamer Center is a joint initiative of the Department of Architecture and the Department of Landscape Architecture at Penn State. Its mission is to promote public interest art, architecture and design by supporting collaborative research projects, facilitating dialogue between the academic and practitioner communities, and recognizing excellence in planning and design from an international perspective. Integral to its education mission is its outreach program to small communities in Pennsylvania to assist them in planning and designing projects they consider important to their growth and revitalization. In the Valley area both Selinsgrove and Sunbury have benefited from similar collaborative initiatives.

The first phase of the study will be marked by a site visit in September to Danville by Penn State students and faculty in order to define their planning and design objectives, research the regional, historical, cultural, environmental and demographic context of the community, prepare a site inventory of the downtown area, and discuss the objectives with a cross-section of individuals in the community. The design will be further refined and focused at a series of community meetings over the next three months, at which there will be student presentations and opportunities for public input about issues related to development and revitalization. The meetings will provide opportunities for the students, as well, to synthesize public comment, gather more data derived from it, and assimilate other area projects into the design. At the end of the fall semester they will present a preliminary design plan that will integrate and align their alternative ideas for revitalizing the downtown area with other area initiatives, such as the Susquehanna River Greenway Project and the North Branch Canal Trail Project. The plan will also offer flexible options for combining the design ideas and phasing them into reality subject to the availability of funding. Following the presentation of the plan, the community will prioritize the alternatives and select those it considers most important to its development. Those choices will be the focus of the students when they return to Danville in the spring semester to elaborate the approved design ideas into conceptual design plans.

This represents an almost unprecedented opportunity for Danville's citizens to work side by side with experienced and promising architects to express their vision of what they most want to preserve, to enhance, to connect, and to change. The goal will be to create a long-term plan for community action in which all will have a stake because all will

have invested in it. As the community seizes this opportunity, it will by individual, grassroots participation achieve a long-sought collective goal that will benefit its citizens for many years to come.

The project coordinator will be Mr. James Wilson, executive director of the DBA and manager of the Main Street program for downtown revitalization. He will be the principal contact for the faculty and students of Penn State, and his office will be responsible for providing administrative support to them and facilitating their interaction with community leaders and citizens. In the very near future the DBA will coordinate a series of public announcements about the community meeting schedule. As the project moves forward, the public can obtain further information about it by contacting the DBA office at 279-4254.

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2008 Danville Events

A picturesque, quintessential river town cradled by low ridges and inhabited by friendly people who are dedicated to honoring the past while anticipating the future, downtown Danville will host a variety of free events in the fall and through the holidays. Bring your family, friends and neighbors to explore the interesting shops, sample its restaurants, and enjoy the festivities in the heart of Danville. For more information, call 570-279-4254.

29th Annual Arts & Crafts Fair, Saturday, September 6, 9 am – 5 pm, rain or shine!

One of the premier craft fairs in this area! Clever, beautiful and useful crafts! The holidays are coming and this is a good time to buy the most unique gifts for family and friends! Delicious food offered by a number of our restaurants and vendors! Come to our interesting downtown and visit our shops, too!

Halloween Parade, Thursday, October 30, 7 pm

A big event in Danville with marching bands, fire trucks and young and old in costume! Come and enjoy – or better still, participate!

Candlelight Shoppers' Preview, Saturday, November 22, 6 pm – 9 pm

An opportunity to visit the unique shops of Danville and enjoy the warmth of their festive holiday decorations and refreshments, too!

Annual Holiday Open House, Sunday, November 23, 12 noon – 5 pm

Enjoy special shopping hours for holiday shoppers, refreshments and the unique welcome of Danville merchants.

Santa's Homecoming, Saturday, November 29

Welcome Santa home! He will take up residence on Mill Street and begin his visits with all the area boys and girls.

Holiday Heritage Weekend, Saturday, December 13 & Sunday, December 14

Tours of Historic Homes
Festive Holiday Activities