



LancasterHistory

For Immediate Release

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LancasterHistory to Host Ceremonial Groundbreaking for New Museum on May 13

Remarks, Behind-the-Scenes Tours of the Thaddeus Stevens & Lydia Hamilton Smith Center for History and Democracy to Kick Off Construction

LANCASTER, PA — On Monday, May 13, 2024, **LancasterHistory** will host a ceremonial groundbreaking for the **Thaddeus Stevens & Lydia Hamilton Smith Center for History and Democracy**, a new museum being developed by the non-profit history organization.

The groundbreaking ceremony will take place in Commons on Vine within the **Lancaster County Convention Center**. The event begins at 9am with coffee and pastries, followed by remarks from local dignitaries. After remarks, the public is invited to tour the Stevens & Smith Center from 10-11am for behind-the-scenes looks at the space before construction officially begins.

Construction of the \$19 Million new museum and educational center, set to open in 2025, will be led by **Benchmark Construction** (Brownstown, PA) and **Centerbrook Architects** (Centerbrook, CT). The two partners previously designed and built LancasterHistory's sustainable headquarters on North President Avenue in 2013. Since 2021, LancasterHistory has also partnered with **Ralph**

Appelbaum Associates (RAA), an international team of researchers, artists, and exhibition designers, to help bring the Stevens & Smith Center to life. Since 1978, RAA has completed more than 700 museum installations in 50 countries and worked on some of the world's most celebrated institutions, such as the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and the forthcoming Obama Presidential Center Museum in Chicago.

The ceremonial groundbreaking comes shortly after LancasterHistory's was awarded a \$499,956 grant from the **National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)**. On April 16, the NEH announced that it awarded \$26.3 Million for 238 Humanities-related projects nationwide, one of which went to LancasterHistory. The grant funds will be used to install permanent exhibitions and provide funding for a museum educator position for the Stevens & Smith Center.

To register for the ceremonial groundbreaking, please visit the website, stevensandsmithcenter.org, to register online to attend the ceremonial groundbreaking. The event is free and open to the public, but registration is required and space is limited. An American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter will be available during remarks and tours of the site. Media inquiries or any questions can be directed to [Emily Miller](#), Director of Marketing & Communications.

Please join us for this next chapter in Lancaster County's history with the Thaddeus Stevens & Lydia Hamilton Smith Center for History and Democracy!

About LancasterHistory

LancasterHistory is a community-based, not-for-profit organization established to educate the public on the history of Lancaster County and its place in the history of Pennsylvania and the United States, to advance the missions of regional historical organizations, and to promote the acquisition, preservation, and interpretation of resources representing the history of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania within the broader context of state and national history, including the homes of 15th US President James Buchanan and home and law office of Congressman Thaddeus Stevens and Lydia Hamilton Smith.

About The Thaddeus Stevens & Lydia Hamilton Smith Center for History and Democracy

The Thaddeus Stevens & Lydia Hamilton Smith Center for History and Democracy is an interpretive museum and education center being developed by LancasterHistory in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Opening in 2025, the Center will examine the life and career of Congressman Stevens and his associate Lydia Hamilton Smith, as well as the long, arduous struggle for freedom and equality in America, through state-of-the-art exhibits, immersive media experiences, and educational programs.

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