



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 18, 2020

FAYETTE COUNTY CULTURAL TRUST WINS SECOND STATE AWARD

Uniontown, PA – The Fayette County Cultural Trust’s Downtown Connellsville Initiative recently received a 2020 Townie Award for its murals project.

Presented by the Pennsylvania Downtown Center, the project was honored in the Public Space Improvement category with the “Connellsville Public Art - Leading the Way” Award.

The Fayette County Cultural Trust is a nonprofit organization with a mission to enrich our area’s quality of life by promoting its cultural, artistic, historic and natural assets; as well as creating partnerships to revitalize communities and further economic development.

As the only statewide nonprofit dedicated solely to revitalizing the Commonwealth’s core communities, the Pennsylvania Downtown Center provides outreach, technical assistance and educational services, primarily through its National Main Street Center.

The Townie-winning murals are located on the Italian Social Club at 400 West Crawford Avenue. The project was funded in partnership through the Fayette County Cultural Trust, the Allegheny Foundation, and the late Michael Prestia’s estate.

Pittsburgh Artist Jeremy Raymer completed the murals in 2019, transforming the previously blank building into a colorful tribute to Connellsville’s storied past.

Cultural Trust Executive Director Daniel Cocks said the club is one of Connellsville’s oldest properties, conveniently located just one block away from the Great Allegheny Passage (GAP) - one of Fayette County’s biggest tourism draws.

“We saw this as a way to entice visitors who are using the GAP to wander closer to the Crawford Bridge and maybe explore other public art projects in Downtown Connellsville,” Cocks said. “Raymer’s murals are known all throughout the region, so we wanted to tie his Pittsburgh murals in with the GAP to kind of connect his work along the bike trail.”

Aiming to celebrate Connellsville’s rich history, the murals include images of a train station, coke oven, coke workers and - in honor of the Social Club - an Italian dinner scene. Raymer first sealed the building’s brick exterior with a white wash, then used spray paint to complete the murals.

The project is featured in a public art brochure created by the Cultural Trust for the local tourism industry. The brochures are available at the city’s Comfort Inn Hotel and several Connellsville bed and breakfasts.

The Cultural Trust received its first state honor in 2017, when it took home the Asset Enhancement Award for the Connellsville Canteen. Cocks and his team will accept the 2020 award at a June ceremony in Reading, Pa.

Cocks said the murals are important to the community, because they help tell Connellsville's story to visitors from all walks of life. He hopes the murals will also encourage locals to explore their hometown's many public art projects.

"These awards are helping to put Connellsville on the map as a great place in Fayette County for everyone to visit and explore," Cocks said.

The Fayette County Cultural Trust is located at 139 West Crawford Ave. in Connellsville. For more information, visit www.FayetteTrust.org; www.DowntownConnellsville.org or www.ConnellsvilleCanteen.org.

For more information about the Pennsylvania Downtown Center Awards, visit www.PADowntown.org.

To learn more about Fayette County, visit www.FayetteCountyPA.org.

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This communication is part of the Fayette County PR Initiative, which is funded through the Fayette County Local Share Account (LSA) and Hotel Tax Grants in cooperation with the Fayette County Board of Commissioners, Fayette Chamber of Commerce, The Redevelopment Authority of the County of Fayette, The Redstone Foundation and other partners. This funding has been designated for the continued promotion and marketing of Fayette County, PA.

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