

From: "DEP depnews" <depnews@dep.state.nj.us>
To: "depnews@listserv.state.nj.us" <depnews@listserv.state.nj.us>
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CONTACT: Bob Considine (609) 984-1795
Lawrence Ragonese (609) 292-2994
Lawrence Hajna (609) 984-1795

PICNIC PAVILIONS UNVEILED AT LIBERTY STATE PARK
Newest Enhancement Marks Administration's Commitment to Make State Parks
More Sustainable

(12/P100) TRENTON - A new picnic area featuring eco-friendly amenities and dramatic views of the Statue of Liberty and the New York City skyline is being unveiled at a ribbon-cutting ceremony today at Liberty State Park.

The picnic pavilions at Freedom Field, the first sheltered picnic area in the park, marks another milestone in the Christie Administration's Sustainable Parks Plan to enhance and expand park programs.

"These pavilions will enhance a location which is already a jewel in the New Jersey State Park system," DEP Commissioner Bob Martin said. "Families, non-profit and private groups will be able to access this facility for picnicking and enjoyment of the park. In line with Gov. Christie's Sustainable Parks Plan, the pavilions also will help generate more visitors and revenues to help make the parks more financially self-sustaining, while maintaining its environmental integrity."

"New Jersey prides itself on offering its visitors and residents stellar customer service. The picnic pavilions represent another great example of the state's commitment to convenient and safe amenities for people who come to the park to enjoy the magnificent views or reflect on the day," said Grace Hanlon, Executive Director of the New Jersey Division of Travel and Tourism.

The two picnic pavilions, one seating 120 visitors and the other seating 80 visitors, are located at Eastern Terminus of Theodore Conrad Drive on the park property in Jersey City. Each pavilion has lights, electrical outlets and charcoal grills, and the facility is wheelchair accessible. A new restroom facility at the site was designed to be eco-friendly with translucent walls providing natural light, waterless urinals, low-water use toilets and electric hand dryers instead of paper towel dispensers. The exterior of the building is illuminated with LED bulbs.

The use of the picnic facility will be by reservation. An affordable day-use fee for each pavilion will be applied.

"The Freedom Field Picnic Pavilions will provide great picnicking options for larger groups and alleviate the high demand on the existing free, open-air picnic areas for the general public," said Lou Valente, Chief Project Advisor on Sustainable Parks for the DEP's Division of Natural and Historic Resources.

The Department of Environmental Protection began construction on the two pavilions, restroom facility, parking lot, paths and scenic overlooks last year. The \$1.8 million project was primarily funded from New Jersey's Corporate Business Tax fund, with \$200,000 provided by the Hudson County's Open Space Trust Fund and another \$30,000 from the Friends of Liberty State Park.

The project was managed by the DEP's Office of Resource Development and the Department of the Treasury's Division of Property Management and Construction. USA Architects served as the project designer and engineer. Jeral Construction Services was the general contractor.

"These picnic pavilions serve the park's true purpose of bringing people of all backgrounds together to relax and enjoy life behind Lady Liberty - the world's greatest symbol of democracy and freedom," said Sam Pesin, President of Friends of Liberty State Park.

"The park is not just a state and regional treasure it is truly an oasis of green in our very urbanized county. The Freedom Pavilions will only add to the experience for all who visit Liberty State Park," said Hudson County Executive Tom DeGise.

Liberty State Park was dedicated on June 14, 1976 as New Jersey's bicentennial gift to the nation. The land that now makes up the park once housed the greatest concentration of freight and commuter rail facilities in the New York Harbor area.

Since 1976, the DEP has been committed to reclaiming the land from its industrial past and developing amenities, services and natural areas to provide a first-rate park experience. Liberty State Park draws more than five million visitors a year. It is New Jersey's most-attended state park and the second most-visited state park in the country.

In addition to wildlife habitats, fields, nature trails, bike paths and a two-mile waterfront walkway along the Hudson River, Liberty State Park also boasts destinations like the Liberty Science Center; Liberty Landing Marina; Maritime Parc and Liberty House restaurants; the historic Central Railroad of New Jersey Terminal building; the Nature Interpretive Center; and the New Jersey Empty Sky 9/11 Memorial.

In November 2011, Governor Chris Christie announced the state's Sustainable Parks Plan designed to keep all 39 of New Jersey's state parks and more than 50 historic sites open, to provide affordable recreation to state residents. Components of the plan, which the Governor announced at Liberty State Park, include enhancing and expanding park programs and events to generate more visitors, with a goal of making the parks more financially self-sustaining.

This summer, Liberty State Park hosted a variety of events and attractions, including the Girl Scouts Council of New Jersey's centennial celebration and the Veuve Clicquot Polo Classic.

For more information on Liberty State Park, visit:
<http://www.nj.gov/dep/parksandforests/parks/liberty.html>

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