

- N E W S R E L E A S E -

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Adams County Irish Festival
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ADAMS COUNTY IRISH FESTIVAL GOES GREEN

Ninth annual event to be held in Gettysburg on Saturday, July 19

GETTYSBURG, PA: With no end in sight for high gasoline prices, the Adams County Irish Festival is going green, and in turn, saving some festival-goers some “green.”

Irish Festival organizers are encouraging visitors to the ninth annual event to carpool through its “Saving o’ the Green!” initiative, where full loads of high-occupancy vehicles – vans, SUVs, station wagons, etc. (including those with third-row seating) – pay only \$40 per vehicle (up to 12 adults).

“This is a great opportunity for our festival patrons to conserve some gasoline and save some money themselves, both in gas and admission,” said Joe Krepps, Operations Manager for the Adams County Irish Festival.

The non-profit Irish Heritage Foundation of Gettysburg presents the 9th Annual Adams County Irish Festival on Saturday, July 19, 2008 in the shady grove of the Gettysburg Moose Park. Held rain or shine, the gate opens at 10 a.m. and the festival runs until 7:30 p.m. The park is located at 100 Moose Road which is just off US Route 30 in Straban Township, about a mile and a half east of the US Route 15 interchange near historic Gettysburg, Pa. Regular admission is \$10 and children under 12 are free.

Featuring a full day of Irish music, food, merchandise and more, the festival offers wholesome family fun and benefits the Irish Heritage Foundation of Gettysburg and the American Ireland Fund, which is an affiliate of The Ireland Funds, an international charitable organization operating in 11 countries that has raised more than \$300 million to support programs of peace and reconciliation, arts and culture, education, and community development throughout the island of Ireland. This year’s festival is sponsored in part by Environmentally Safe Products, Harrisburg St. Patrick’s Day Parade Association, Garryowen Irish Pub and Flatbush Golf Course.

Southcentral Pennsylvania is traditionally known for being an area populated by German immigrants, but what is less known is its Irish heritage. In the last census, about 15 percent of Adams County’s population claimed Irish ancestry. Many of the early 18th century

settlers in what is now Adams County were Irish or Scots-Irish immigrants and various place names in the county such as Irishtown, Straban, Tyrone and McSherrystown reflect the Irish influence.

Now in its ninth year, the Adams County Irish Festival has grown to be a highly anticipated regional summer event that appeals not only to those interested in Irish heritage and culture but also to bluegrass music fans as that genre has its roots in traditional music of Ireland and Scotland. The oldest and largest Irish festival in southcentral Pennsylvania drew a crowd of more than 3,000 people last year who enjoyed local, regional and internationally known musicians, Irish step dancers, Irish food, music workshops, living history exhibits plus art, craft and gift vendors.

Another big turnout is anticipated for this year's festival as organizers have once again assembled an impressive entertainment line-up featuring the original Riverdance's button accordion master John Whelan plus several popular regional musical groups, two Irish dance troupes, a pipes and drums band and special children's activities.

Whelan, a seven-time All-Ireland Champion accordionist, returns for a second consecutive appearance at the Adams County Irish Festival. Last year, Whelan performed with an ensemble but this time he will be backed by his own band. Raised in England by parents who both came from Ireland, Whelan was immersed in traditional Irish music at a young age. He moved to America in 1980 and soon began performing with Riverdance fiddler Eileen Ivers in what became one of the most popular Irish duos of the decade. Whelan also performed in the original Broadway production of Riverdance. In America, Whelan was exposed to other types of music and he expanded the boundaries of Celtic music through collaborative projects with artists from the country and world music scenes. In the late 90s, the John Whelan Band thrilled audiences in America and Europe and Whelan was named Traditionalist of the Year by the *Irish Echo* in 1998. Whelan has recorded more than a half-dozen albums. In addition to success as an instrumentalist, composer and arranger, Whelan has made appearances on Connecticut Public Television, appeared in Ang Lee's 1999 film *Ride With the Devil* and produced the Celtic rock band Black Thorn in 2001.

Back by popular demand for a second consecutive appearance is Maidens IV, a fiery band of four sisters hailing from rural Ohio. At the 2007 festival, these enchanting young ladies captivated the audience with intricate harmonies, colorful costumes, fine music and exquisite choreography. Also back by popular demand for their fourth festival appearance is Barleyjuice, a kilt-clad high energy band from the Philadelphia area. Making their festival debuts will be Baltimore's *Amhranai na Gaeilge* Men's Chorus and Tin Kettle, a traditional Irish music trio based in southcentral Pennsylvania. Rounding out the music slate are the thunderous sounds of Harrisburg's Lochiel Emerald Society Police and Fire Pipes and Drums who are making their third festival appearance and The Spalpeens, a popular band from Baltimore who are returning for their second appearance after a one-year hiatus. Irish step dancing is also on the entertainment docket with performances by OH! Gill's Irish Dancers and the Coyle School of Irish Dance.

Special activities for youngsters include a children's show for the second consecutive

year by national recording artist Ray Owen of Gettysburg whose repertoire includes a veritable feast of Irish songs and sea chanteys that provide an engaging musical journey celebrating the role of the Irish in the building of America. New this year is the Flanigan Family who will also provide some children's fun on stage and throughout the day.

In addition to all-day entertainment, several other activities are offered at the festival. More than two dozen vendors will be selling different Irish goods plus food and beverages. Festival-goers can also participate in interactive music workshops on the fiddle, penny (or tin) whistle and *bodhran* (Irish drum) and take in an *Uilleann* Pipes (Irish parlor pipes) demonstration. Exhibits include living history displays by re-enactors from the 69th New York State Volunteers (the famous Irish Brigade of the Civil War) and the West Cork Flying Column (Army of Irish Volunteers from the early 20th century Anglo-Irish War that established the Irish Republic); a traveling display on The Burren, a region of bare limestone rock in Ireland with extraordinary landscapes, unusual flora and wildlife, and ancient megalithic tombs and monuments; and various Irish-American organizations.

For more information, visit the festival's website at www.adamscountyirishfestival.com The Adams County Irish Festival is produced and presented by the Irish Heritage Foundation of Gettysburg, an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

Event Details ("If you go...")

What: 9th Annual Adams County Irish Festival

When: Saturday July 19, 2008; 10 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Where: Gettysburg Moose Park, 100 Moose Road

Cost: \$10; children under 12, free; Full high-occupancy vehicles (up to 12 adults), \$40

For more info: www.adamscountyirishfestival.com

Entertainment Schedule

10:30-11 a.m.	Flanigan Family's Adventure in Fun! – Children's Show (Glen Stage)
11 a.m.-12 p.m.	<i>Amhranai na Gaeilge</i> Men's Chorus
11 a.m.-12 p.m.	Ray Owen – Children's Show (Glen Stage)
12-12:30 p.m.	Opening Ceremony – Bagpiper Rodney Owens, 69 th New York State Volunteers, West Cork Flying Column, Lochiel Emerald Society Pipes and Drums
12:30-1:30 p.m.	Tin Kettle
2-3 p.m.	The Spalpeens
3-3:30 p.m.	OH! Gill's Irish Dancers (Third Stage)
3:30-4:30 p.m.	Maidens IV
5-6 p.m.	John Whelan Band
6-6:30 p.m.	Coyle School of Irish Dance (Third Stage)
6:30-7:30 p.m.	Barleyjuice

MEDIA COVERAGE INVITED!

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