



# Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**June 25, 2025**

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## **Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission Announces Largest Investment in State Museum History to Modernize the State Museum and Provide More Opportunities for Pennsylvanians to Engage with Their History**



*PHMC's \$55 million investment over three years will transform the State Museum of Pennsylvania.*

*These critical museum upgrades continue PHMC's progress on modernizing Pennsylvania's collection, including a new State Archives building that was unveiled in 2023.*

**Harrisburg, PA** – The Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission is proud to announce a landmark \$55 million infrastructure revitalization of the State Museum of Pennsylvania’s iconic mid-century modern building.

This transformative project will position the Museum to meet the expectations of 21<sup>st</sup> century visitors and offer new dynamic experiences, making the State Museum a premier cultural destination, attracting residents and tourists alike to learn more about Pennsylvania history. The project is also focused on stewardship, providing first-class collections storage areas for the Museum’s most sensitive collections.

This will be the largest and most comprehensive upgrade to the complex since the museum and tower opened in 1964. The project is expected to begin in the spring of 2026. The State Museum of Pennsylvania will remain open through July 2026 to celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. The Museum is expected to be closed from August of 2026 until early 2029.

PHMC also unveiled a new state-of-the-art Pennsylvania State Archives building in December 2023.

“This project is more than a renovation—it’s an invitation to Pennsylvanians to explore their home state. With this project, we are creating a vibrant space for telling Pennsylvania’s rich and significant history, making improvements to meet the expectations of today’s visitors and adding new dynamic experiences,” said **Andrea Lowery, PHMC Executive Director**. “As stewards of this history for future generations, we are also making critical improvements to provide state-of-the-art environments for the long-term protection and preservation of the artifacts entrusted to our care.”

### **Key Renovations:**

The project will renovate the complex originally known as the William Penn Memorial Museum and Archives Tower. The Museum will be updated to meet the needs of the modern visitor, while the PHMC Tower will be renovated for collections storage.

The project will create unrivalled experiences within Harrisburg. The entrance will be enlivened with a large-scale media experience and a free introductory exhibit, and the upper levels of the iconic museum building and tower will be reimagined. On the fifth floor of the Museum, a new event space and roof terrace will be created, with views overlooking the Susquehanna River and sweeping to the State Capitol. At the uppermost floor of the PHMC Tower, a double-height observation level will allow visitors to explore the dynamic relationship between the land and waterways of Pennsylvania and the people, past and present, who have called the Commonwealth home.

### **Enhanced Visitor Experience | State Museum of Pennsylvania**

- New welcome experience with renovated lobby and a new introductory exhibit
- Installation of two 15-person passenger elevators within the museum
- Creation of a new event space and roof terrace on the fifth floor

- New museum stores
- Improved visitor amenities

### **Enhanced Visitor Experience | PHMC Tower**

- Installation of two 15-person passenger elevators within the PHMC tower
- Creation of an educational observation level at the 16<sup>th</sup> floor of the PHMC tower

### **Improved Stewardship**

- New collections storage areas with state-of-the-art environmental controls
- New changing exhibit gallery for hosting special artifact loans and traveling exhibits

The renovation is being designed by project architects, VITETTA, a DRG Architects Company, and annum of Boston, MA.

There are currently two exhibits in design. The new ground floor welcome exhibit exploring the many regions and identities of Pennsylvania is slated to open with the renovated museum. Likewise, a newly designed Curiosity Connection, serving the Museum's youngest visitors (ages 0-6) is being planned for the reopening.

Following the completion of this renovation, nearly half the Museum's standing galleries will be reimagined over the following 8 years with new exhibitions exploring Pennsylvania's rich history through compelling stories, dynamic and immersive displays, and engaging and interactive experiences.

### **About the State Museum of Pennsylvania**

The State Museum of Pennsylvania is one of 23 historic sites and museums administered by the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission as part of the [Pennsylvania Trails of History](#).

As one of PHMC's premier cultural institutions, The State Museum of Pennsylvania offers visitors a captivating journey through time. Located adjacent to the State Capitol in Harrisburg, the museum houses expansive collections that illuminate Pennsylvania's pivotal role in American history, from the dawn of geologic time, the Colonial and Revolutionary eras, a pivotal Civil War battleground, and the Commonwealth's vast industrial age. The State Museum demonstrates that Pennsylvania's story is America's story.

For more information about The State Museum of Pennsylvania, visit [statemuseumpa.org](http://statemuseumpa.org) or follow us on [Facebook](#) and [X \(formerly Twitter\)](#).

The Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission is the official history agency of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Learn more by visiting [PHMC online](#) or following us on [Facebook](#), [X \(formerly Twitter\)](#), [Instagram](#) or [LinkedIn](#).

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