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Contact: Lawrence Hajna (609) 984-1795
Lawrence Ragonese (609) 292-2994

**NEW VISITOR CENTER FOR MONMOUTH BATTLEFIELD STATE PARK
RECEIVES PRESTIGIOUS INTERNATIONAL ARCHITECTURAL AWARD**

*STATE-OF-ART CENTER FUSES MODERN ARCHITECTURE AND INTERACTIVE EXHIBITS TO
BRING PIVOTAL REVOLUTIONARY WAR BATTLE TO LIFE*

TRENTON – The Christie Administration today announced that the new visitor center at Monmouth Battlefield State Park in Manalapan is a recipient of the prestigious International Architectural Award presented by the Chicago Athenaeum Museum of Architecture and Design and the European Centre for Architecture Art Design and Urban Studies.

“We are incredibly honored to be recognized by these world-renowned organizations for our efforts to bring history to life through the new visitor center at Monmouth Battlefield State Park,” Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Bob Martin said. “The visitor center uniquely fuses modern architecture with fascinating historical exhibits and a panoramic view of the battlefield to tell the story of one of the largest and most important battles of the American Revolution.”

The International Architectural Award is the highest and most prestigious awards program honoring new and cutting-edge building design, according to the Chicago Athenaeum Museum of Architecture. The state-of-the-art visitor center, dedicated June 13, 2013, on the eve of the 235th anniversary of the battle, was designed by Princeton-based ikon.5 architects, which conceived it as a modern day version of a primitive hut.

“The visitor center is a light-filled transparent pavilion at the top of Combs Hill that focuses attention on the most enduring artifact of the battle – the majestic landscape of the battlefield,” said ikon.5 principal Joseph Tattoni. “A floor to ceiling glass wall enhances the visitor experience by allowing unencumbered integration with the surrounding landscape.”

The 3,000-acre battlefield is one of New Jersey’s premier historic sites. The battle took place when George Washington’s Continental Army intercepted an army of British, German and Loyalist soldiers fleeing from Philadelphia to New York to escape an impending blockade of the Delaware River by a French fleet. While the British-led troops slipped away that night, the battle established the effectiveness and viability of the Continental Army and is considered an important strategic and political victory for Washington.

The nearly 13,000-square-foot visitor center was designed with windows framing a panoramic view of the rolling terrain upon which the Battle of Monmouth was fought on June 28, 1778. Fascinating and clearly worded exhibits are complemented by park interpretive specialists to bring to life the battle that unfolded on the farmland outside the center’s windows.

“We wanted to truly engage our visitors by bringing to life the sights and sounds of the battlefield,” said Richard Boornazian, Assistant Commissioner for Natural and Historic Resources. “The visitor center, with its stunning exhibits and captivating movie about the battle, helps them get a better idea of what it would have been like to have been actual witnesses to the Battle of Monmouth. We congratulate ikon.5 for going beyond fulfilling our expectations.”

The battlefield visitor center is one of more than 80 projects from 20 nations that will be honored during a special exhibition in Istanbul, Turkey in November.

The visitor center boasts interactive exhibits, artwork, timelines, maps and excavated artifacts, as well as a souvenir and book shop. It also features a 100-seat movie theater for a short film that explains the battle and its significance.

“We highly recommend that you make the center your first stop at Monmouth Battlefield,” said State Park Service Director Mark Texel. “The exhibits showcased here are designed to help you understand the importance of what happened here in a way that will both engage and enlighten.”

Monmouth Battlefield State Park preserves a picturesque landscape of hilly farmland and hedgerows that encompasses miles of hiking and horseback riding trails, a picnic area, a restored Revolutionary War farmhouse, and even pick-your-own orchards. Fox News ranked Monmouth Battlefield as one of the world’s best preserved battlefields.

The visitor center is part of the Administration’s long-term strategy to keep parks vibrant, economically sustainable and affordable. The state’s model is designed to make the park experience more rewarding for the park system’s millions of visitors, while allowing the State Park Service to focus resources on stewardship and protection of the state’s important natural, historic and cultural assets.

The park is open daily from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. The visitor center is open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. every day except Monday. For more on Monmouth Battlefield State Park, visit:

<http://www.state.nj.us/dep/parksandforests/parks/monbat.html>

