



Media Contacts:

Brady Smith, Chief Communications Officer
412-454-6459
bmsmith@heinzhistorycenter.org

Lauryn Nania, Communications Coordinator
412-454-6382
ltvania@heinzhistorycenter.org

Meadowcroft Unveils New Robert Barenfeld Center

-The National Historic Landmark's new facility will feature a picnic pavilion, gift shop, event spaces, and more-

PITTSBURGH, April 21, 2025 – Meadowcroft Rockshelter and Historic Village, part of the Senator John Heinz History Center family of museums, today unveiled the Robert Barenfeld Center, which will serve visitors who travel to Avella, Pa., to see the oldest site of human habitation in North America.

The Robert Barenfeld Center features new visitor amenities, including a gift shop, picnic pavilion, exhibition gallery, library, and an orientation room that will showcase an introductory video to the site.

The new facility, which will also include meeting spaces to accommodate students, public programs, and event rentals, was made possible thanks to a generous gift from the Barenfeld Family.

"Meadowcroft is a hidden gem in Western Pennsylvania and one of our region's most important cultural attractions," said David Barenfeld. "This beautiful new visitor center will help welcome thousands of families from around the region and the world to enjoy Meadowcroft's 275 acres and historic offerings."

Beginning in late May, the Robert Barenfeld Center will also include a new exhibition, ***Meadowcroft: The Site that Rocked the World***, where visitors can learn more about the Rockshelter and see the Miller Point, which will be on public view for the first time at Meadowcroft.

On July 31, 1976, the Miller Point was discovered by archaeologist Joe Yedlowski during a field school excavation at the Rockshelter, led by University of Pittsburgh professor Dr. James M. Adovasio. The discovery and excavation of the site led to further testing that concluded the Rockshelter served as a campsite for prehistoric hunters and gatherers 19,000 years ago.

Dr. Diane Landers, a University of Pittsburgh graduate student during the early days of the excavation, now serves as the chair for the Meadowcroft Advisory Board.

The Robert Barenfeld Center is made possible with support from the **Barenfeld Family, Cindrich Family, Torrence M. Hunt Jr., E. Alex Paris III, and Richard L. & Margaret White.**

Financial support provided by **Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Honorable Josh Shapiro, Governor; Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED); Washington County Local Share Account (LSA) Program**; and with funds from gaming revenues under the **Pennsylvania Racehorse Development and Gaming Act** and **Washington County Tourism Promotion Agency**.

Opening Weekend and Free Museum Day

The Robert Barenfeld Center will open just in time for Meadowcroft's 56th season, which begins on Saturday, May 3, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Meadowcroft will also participate in Washington County Tourism's Free Museum Day on Sunday, May 4, offering visitors a chance to explore the site for free as part of a county-wide celebration of history and culture.

Following its opening day on Saturday, May 3, Meadowcroft is open on weekends, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., through Memorial Day. During the summer season (Memorial Day through Labor Day) the site is open Wednesday to Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Following Labor Day, the site is open on weekends through Nov. 23.

For more information, visit heinzhistorycenter.org/meadowcroft.

Meadowcroft Rockshelter and Historic Village operates in association with the Senator John Heinz History Center, an affiliate of the Smithsonian in Pittsburgh and Pennsylvania's largest history museum. Meadowcroft, a National Historic Landmark, is the oldest site of human habitation in North America and features a massive rock overhang used by the region's first inhabitants for shelter as early as 19,000 years ago. Meadowcroft's 19th-century village features a covered bridge, one-room schoolhouse, blacksmith shop, church, and two log houses that create a charming country village setting. The 16th-century Indian Village includes wigwams, recreated prehistoric artifacts, and hands-on activities related to American Indian agriculture. Meadowcroft Rockshelter and Historic Village is located in Avella, Pa., Washington County, within an hour's drive of Pittsburgh, Wheeling, W.Va., and Steubenville, Ohio.



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