

**Waldwick**

# Train station on Endangered Historic Places list

The Waldwick Train Station on Hewson Avenue has been placed on the 2011 list of the 10 Most Endangered Historic Places in New Jersey. The program spotlights irreplaceable historic, architectural, cultural and archeological resources in New Jersey that are in imminent danger of being lost. The list, produced by Preservation New Jersey, is based on the likelihood that historic buildings and places can be brought back to useful and productive life.

"I am very proud that our efforts are getting noticed and that other credible outside organizations recognize the significance and need for the success of this project," said an elated Doug Cowie, Waldwick Community Alliance (WCA) vice-president, who attended the press conference



A historic photograph of the Waldwick Train Station.

our need for funding does not stop when the restoration of the station is complete. We must continue to raise money for our ultimate goal of developing the Waldwick Historic Museum. There will be ongoing costs for insurance, utilities and maintenance."

The non-profit WCA has been the deteriorated station's champion since 2005. The group of local residents and business owners, whose emphasis is on improving the downtown area around the railroad tracks, focused on restoration of the unused station as a catalyst. While the group has been raising funds for the station's preservation for five years, securing large donations and grants has been difficult because the nonprofit does not have control of the property. In 2009, after several years of negotiation, the WCA finally secured a long-term lease for the depot from New Jersey Transit. Since that time the WCA has secured the interior and provided temporary roof repairs. Work on the roof, chimney, Yankee gutters, sill plate and grading to prevent further water damage is expected to begin later this summer.

The Waldwick Railroad Station was built in 1886 and is an excellent example of the small suburban frame railroad depots that were popular throughout New Jersey during the late 19th century. It was later utilized as a shelter for train commuters until it was closed by NJ Transit in the 1970s and no longer maintained. Designed in a vernacular Queen Anne Style, this New Jersey and National Register of Historic Places-listed station features a corbelled chimney, slate roof, half timbering and stucco walls, iron ridge cresting, decorative stick work in the gables and carved brackets supporting its broad eaves. The interior is in good condition, and retains decorative wood trim around the doors and windows and wainscoting and beaded board finishes throughout. Also extant are historic details emblematic of the building type, including benches and a central cast iron stove for heating.

Ultimately, the all-volunteer WCA aims to establish a local history and railroad museum. The group has been collecting photographs and documents as well as artifacts from the rail station, including a functioning freight scale, original iron fencing, early 20th-century light fixtures and freight receipts that help illustrate the small depot's role in



WCA Vice President Doug Cowie at the press conference on the steps of the State Capital Building in Trenton.

on the steps of the State Capital Building in Trenton where the Waldwick Train Station was officially named. "I'm also quite proud that the Waldwick Train Station was added to a list with other very high-profile significant sites. Preservation NJ allows us to get the word out for support all across the state and allows those outside of Bergen County to learn about, and hopefully support this project. They will also continue to support our project through advertising and reaching out to historic societies and donors," Cowie said, adding: "To date, the WCA has had a very successful track record with our fundraisers, but I truly hope that with this recognition, we can attract serious donors. Because

the late 19th / early 20th century transportation industry and suburban growth the area enjoyed as a result of the construction of the Waldwick Station. At one time, 50 percent of all households in Waldwick had a least one family member working for the railroad.

Funding will come from the WCA's coffers until the group finds out whether it has been awarded a Bergen County Historic Preservation Grant, which is expected to be announced at the end of October.

"There is no guarantee that we will absolutely receive a grant, but we have been told that we are likely high on the list due to the fact that we have done all the necessary preparations. We have completed a very detailed Historic Structure Report; detailed architectural plans and specs have been completed and approved by the State of New Jersey; we have State Historic Preservation Office approval, and our contractors have been approved by the county and state. So we are more or less a "shovel ready" project," Cowie explained. "So given the legwork already completed coupled with the desirability of this project, I am very optimistic that we will receive all or close to the amount of grants that we requested," he said.

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## Seat belt enforcement campaign under way

Law enforcement officers from the Waldwick Police Department will be cracking down on unbuckled motorists and their passengers as part of the national "Click it or Ticket" campaign.

The campaign, which began May 23 and will continue through June 5, emphasizes seat belt compliance through high visibility law enforcement seat belt checkpoints and saturation patrols.

"Using a seat belt is the simplest way for a driver and his or her passengers to protect themselves when traveling," said Gary Poedubicky, acting director of the New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety. "Motor vehicle occupants who buckle-up increase their chances of surviving a crash by as much as 75 percent."

Last year, the front seat belt use rate in New Jersey rose for the fourteenth consecutive year to 93.73 percent. Poedu-

bicky noted that, while front seat belt use rates continue to increase, law enforcement and safety officials want to ultimately see a 100 percent compliance rate. This year, officers will also focus on rear seat occupant's belt use.

Officer Adam Garcia, Waldwick Police Department's traffic safety officer, will be coordinating the department's effort with this year's campaign. Officer Garcia hopes the extra enforcement and education from this campaign will get more people in the habit of buckling up, especially during the summer season when roadway crashes account for a larger number of the overall totals.

During the 2010, "Click it or Ticket" campaign, 406 police agencies from across the state participated in the two-week initiative. As a result of the effort, law enforcement officers issued 35,671 seat belt citations, 5,832 speeding summonses, and made 592 drunk driving arrests.

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