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Contact: August R. Carlino, President & CEO
(412) 999-3678 (mobile)
arcarlino@riversofsteel.com

Congress Passes Legislation Reauthorizing Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area

December 12, 2014, Homestead, PA – Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area was reauthorized by the U.S. Senate, extending its legislative authority through 2021. The passage of the National Defense Authorization Act, which contained language reauthorizing Rivers of Steel and several other National Heritage Areas (NHAs), was critical to the continued work of Rivers of Steel in southwestern Pennsylvania. Senator Bob Casey, whose legislation to reauthorize Rivers of Steel in the package, spearheaded the effort. The U.S. House of Representative passed similar legislation last week, and the bill now goes to President Obama for his signature.

“Rivers of Steel is grateful to Senator Casey for his strong support and leadership in pursuing the reauthorization of Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area. We look forward to continue working with Senator Casey and the other members of the southwestern Pennsylvania Congressional Delegation, the local governments, our partners and the communities,” said August R. Carlino, President and Chief Executive Officer.

Rivers of Steel was created by Congress in 1996 to conserve, protect and promote the industrial and cultural heritage of Pittsburgh and Southwestern Pennsylvania covering eight counties (Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Fayette, Greene, Washington and Westmorland). An economic impact study of Rivers of Steel conducted by the National Park Service in 2012 showed the result of the federal investment in Rivers of Steel produced \$69,441,323 in direct economic benefit to the southwestern Pennsylvania region, supporting 901 jobs and generating \$6,047,217 in tax revenue for the region.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the first NHA designated by Congress. NHAs are places where natural, cultural, and historic resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally-important landscape. Through the collective resources of partners, NHAs tell significant stories that celebrate our nation's diverse heritage. NHAs are lived-in landscapes managed by local entities working in partnership with the National Park Service (NPS), the states, and local agencies, balancing the protection of resources and enhancement of local economies. The work of NHAs supports more than 148,000 jobs nationwide.

NHAs are a proven model of how sharing responsibility can be a very cost-effective approach for the NPS to preserve and tell the many significant stories of America. The NHAs strive to increase the capacity of local agencies and promote economic development in the communities where they work. NHAs have leveraged additional funds beyond NPS funding at a ratio of 4-to-1 to support the enhancement and management of their key resources.