

Eckley Miners' Village should be preserved in purely historical fashion

Editor,

I'm writing on behalf of the Greater Hazleton Area Civic Partnership Rails to Trails Committee regarding the recent news articles on turning some of the homes at Eckley Miners' Village to modern rental housing.

The Greater Hazleton Rails to Trails starts near Hazleton and continues down the main street of Eckley and eventually reaches the Delaware Lehigh National Heritage Corridor

Trail between White Haven and Rockport.

In my opinion, even the thought of turning any of the homes at Eckley into rental housing would seriously impact not only the village, but the Greater Hazleton Rails to Trails.

The Greater Hazleton Rails to Trails will bring a great recreational trail to all the residents of our area, but also will have a large economic impact to our area. The visi-

tors who will come to use the trail will not only spend money in local restaurants, sporting goods stores, but many will also spend the weekend spending money at our hotels.

I understand the whole idea of renovating some of those homes for rental housing is financially driven by the state. As the director of a non-profit organization, I seek grants through the Pennsylvania State Heritage Park Program that preserves, enhances

and promotes natural, cultural, historic, scenic areas and structures in our region.

This thought of doing the opposite by converting historical buildings into modern structures in a historical area is incomprehensible to me. The idea, as it stands, will be a serious detriment to our area and tourism in general to the village and the recreational trail.

I would like to offer some alternative ideas for consider-

ation. The first recommendation would be to develop a camp ground near Eckley that would help attract more visitors to the village and to the trail and finance the continuing expenses to maintain the homes.

My second recommendation would be to restore the homes in their period circa and rent them to visitors to the village and trail. This will not only maintain the homes as they should be maintained,

but also offer visitors a chance to experience life as it was in the mid 1800s.

On behalf of myself and the Greater Hazleton Rails to Trails Committee, we urge the continuing preservation of Eckley Miners' Village in a purely historical atmosphere.

Robert P. Skulsky,
executive director,
Greater Hazleton Area
Civic Partnership