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**Preservation League of New York State provides loan
to stabilize and relocate the 1816 Farmington Quaker Meetinghouse**
\$120,000 bridge loan to preserve site with ties to social justice movements

ALBANY, NY – April 23, 2010 – The Preservation League of New York State recently disbursed a loan from its Endangered Properties Intervention Program (EPIP) to a Farmington organization which will protect and restore the 1816 Farmington Quaker Meetinghouse

The League’s EPIP program was established with state funds to foster the revitalization and protection of historic resources and neighborhoods throughout New York. The loan will help support the stabilization and relocation of one of the earliest known Quaker meetinghouses still standing west of the colonial settlement areas in North America.

As a crucible of major reform movements, the walls of the 1816 Farmington Quaker Meetinghouse once echoed with debates over freedom and equality for women, Seneca Indians and African Americans in upstate New York and the nation. Farmington Quakers helped organize the first woman’s rights convention at Seneca Falls in 1848, successfully arranged a compromise treaty in 1842 allowing the Seneca to remain on their Allegany and Cattaraugus homelands, and worked closely with the Underground Railroad network to assist freedom seekers.

Quakers settled in the Farmington area in 1789, and built their first meetinghouse in 1804. By 1816, the congregation was so numerous that they built a larger meetinghouse across the road. In 1927, they sold the 1816 meetinghouse, and the new owner moved it 325 feet north of its original position, where it became a storage barn. The building began to fall into disrepair in the 1990s, and was nearly razed in 2007 as a public safety hazard. Now stabilized, the building will be moved this year to a nearby site to facilitate public access.

“This structure is a powerful reminder of the chorus of voices – irrepressible, resonant and persistent – that cried out for social justice for women, Native Americans and African Americans,” said Jay DiLorenzo, President of the Preservation League of New York State. “The loss of this building would have ripped countless pages from the history of this community, the Empire State, and the nation. The Preservation League is delighted to support the efforts to

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preserve this building, so it may continue to illustrate the story of these struggles for equality and freedom.”

The 1816 Farmington Quaker Meetinghouse Museum, a 501c3 organization, will restore, preserve and interpret the building as an educational and tourism center, reaching out to people of diverse ages and backgrounds to educate about the importance of the building and the area in national reform movements, inspire visitors to explore the meaning of equality and justice in their own lives, and enhance economic development in the region through heritage tourism.

“The EPIP loan is of immeasurable help in preserving and restoring this nationally important site,” said Judy Wellman, Chair of the organization’s steering committee and Professor Emerita at SUNY Oswego. “People in nineteenth New York State made remarkable contributions in shaping the identity of America around the ideal that all people are created equal. This Meetinghouse helps tell their stories. It is a beacon that shines from the past into the present and future, challenging all of us to carry out ideals of democracy. It would not be saved without this help, and we are immensely grateful.”

The 1816 Farmington Quaker Meetinghouse Museum will use the \$120,000 loan from the Preservation League to support the cost of stabilizing the building (completed in December 2009), and moving it to a 3.5 acre site at the intersection of Sheldon Road and County Road 8.

This is the fourth loan from the Preservation League’s EPIP program. Previous loans were made to the Newark Niagara LLC to fund stabilization and pre-development work at the historic E&B Holmes Machinery Co. complex on the Buffalo River waterfront in Erie County; Cider Mill Friends of Open Space and Historic Preservation, Inc. to help support the purchase of the Kimlin Cider Mill and 1.8 acres of surrounding buffer land in the town of Poughkeepsie, Dutchess County; and to The Landmarks Society of Greater Utica which purchased two endangered historic properties at 1 and 3 Rutger Park in Utica, Oneida County.

“The Endangered Properties Intervention Program allows the Preservation League to take action when historic buildings are threatened with disinvestment, neglect, and demolition,” said DiLorenzo. “The Preservation League is proud to partner with the 1816 Farmington Quaker Meetinghouse Museum to protect and restore this significant historic structure. We look forward to returning to Farmington and seeing the progress on the site. We are certain that the results will be an inspiration to others.”

For more information on the Preservation League of New York State, please call 518-462-5658 or visit the League’s website at www.preservenys.org.