



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **CETRONIA AMBULANCE CORPS AND LEHIGH COUNTY BREAK GROUND ON JOINT OPERATIONS, COMMUNITY EDUCATION & MEDICO-LEGAL FORENSIC CENTER**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, ALLENTOWN, PA (February 22, 2013) – Governor Tom Corbett, Lieutenant Governor Jim Cawley, State EMS Director Joseph Schmider, Senator Pat Browne and Representative Ryan Mackenzie joined representatives from Cetronia Ambulance Corps and Lehigh County at the ceremonial groundbreaking for their new Joint Operations, Community Education and Medico-Legal Forensics Center located at the intersection of Broadway and Parkway Roads in South Whitehall Township on Thursday, February 21<sup>st</sup>. “We strongly believe that a regionalized approach to public health and safety is in the best interest of our community. As part of our unique collaboration with Lehigh County, we will expand the capabilities for response to emergencies, natural disasters and every day medico-legal events. It will lead to revolutionary advances in pre-hospital emergency care, resulting in even more lives saved,” said Larry Wiersch, Chief Executive Officer of Cetronia Ambulance Corps.

The new 68,000 SQ FT facility supports Cetronia’s regional approach to public health and safety, as well as its continuous reinvestment in the community. The building will capitalize on shared efficiencies by co-locating Cetronia Ambulance Corps and Lehigh County’s Medico-legal forensics operations, as well as centralizing Cetronia’s crew shift starts and vehicle maintenance with its communications, billing, education and administrative functions. Along with Cetronia’s fleet, the garage space will house the County’s emergency response, hazardous materials, special operations equipment and vehicles. The state-of-art education center will be used to train EMS, public health and safety providers throughout the Eastern PA region, as well as for community health education programs. “This building will stand as a symbol of how state, county and local governments work together to provide for the public’s safety. That’s a core function of

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government and the people of Cetronia and Lehigh County are essential to keeping the public safe,” said Governor Tom Corbett.

Cetronia first approached Lehigh County with the concept of a shared facility in 2009 after recognizing the increased demand for services and unmet needs for housing equipment and services that had to be addressed. Not only is Cetronia experiencing a significant increase in the demand for mutual aid requests but it is also preparing for regional planning commission projections of a 32% increase in the 55 and older population in the Lehigh Valley by the year 2030. "I am very encouraged by the way that we have been able to cooperate with Cetronia Ambulance to combine these necessary and related services into one facility and save our taxpayers money," said Lehigh County Executive Bill Hansell. "When we can reduce the overhead of operating multiple facilities, everyone benefits."The new facility will replace Cetronia's existing and aged operations center (currently located on Broadway), which was built in 1962, allowing Cetronia to consolidate their facilities and resources to further support and enhance their High Performance EMS system. "These system and efficiency changes will equate to improved service and enhanced system reliability in every community that Cetronia serves," added Wiersch.

As part of the press conference and groundbreaking ceremony, it was announced that the communications center in this new facility will be called the John E. Walson Emergency Communications Center in memory of the former President & CEO of Service Electric. Family members of the late Mr. Walson and representatives from Service Electric presented Wiersch with the first installment of their multi-year pledge, which will include cash and in-kind services totaling a \$350,000 investment. "Service Electric Cable TV and the Walson family are proud to support this project in the memory of John E. Walson and his passion for giving back to the community through state-of-the-art communications technology," said Michelle Walson Kuykendall.

Cetronia Ambulance Corps will remain an independent, 501c(3) not-for-profit community based organization. This project, while sharing resources with Lehigh County, is being funded solely by community and corporate donations, subscription services, grants, and funds saved and reserved by Cetronia for many years in anticipation of replacing their existing facility. To help offset the construction costs of the \$8.2 million project; Cetronia has launched an on-going capital campaign which has been supported in part by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Honorable Tom Corbett, Governor, with a Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP) allocation of \$1.75 million. The RACP legislation was introduced by Senator Patrick Browne and supported by the caucuses of both parties which include Senator Lisa Boscola, former Representative Douglas Reichley, former Representative Jennifer Mann, Representative Julie Harhart, former Representative Joseph Brennan, and Representative Gary Day. Cetronia's other major capital campaign contributors to date include Service Electric Cable TV, PPL Electric Utilities, Keystone Nazareth Charitable Foundation, The Harry C. Trexler Trust, Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce, The Century Fund, The Ross Born Family Foundation, Fellowship Community, Charles H. Hoch Foundation, Caruso Benefits Group, the Holiday Inn Conference Center, the Board of Trustees of Cetronia Ambulance Corps, as well as the

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employees and volunteers of Cetronia Ambulance Corps. Financing assistance is also being provided by the Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation and Embassy Bank of the Lehigh Valley. **For more information on how you can contribute to our capital campaign and make the difference of a lifetime, please contact Jeff Frank, Capital Campaign Chairman, at 484-894-1034 or Larry Wiersch, Cetronia CEO, at 610-530-5502.**

Cetronia Ambulance Corps underwent a competitive bid process for this project, awarding the Construction Management bid to Boyle Construction of South Whitehall Township, selecting Spillman Farmer as the lead architect and Keystone Consulting Engineering Group as lead engineer. Bids for General Construction and trades are currently in progress. Physical construction is expected to begin in late March and will take about one year to complete. “Teamwork is the golden ring. And the Cetronia Ambulance project is a perfect example of how several entities came together to bring an important project to fruition, said LVEDC President and CEO Don Cunningham. “As Lehigh County executive, I saw the value in this project as Cetronia Ambulance Corps provides emergency and non-emergency medical transportation services to several communities and I’m pleased that LVEDC’s finance team provided a critical portion of the money to spur the construction.”

Cetronia Ambulance Corps, founded in 1955, is a non-profit, 501(c)3 community based emergency medical services provider prominently located in the Lehigh Valley. Cetronia Ambulance Corps is one of the largest providers of ambulance services in Eastern Pennsylvania; employing 125 full and part time career associates, 20 active volunteers and boasting a total fleet of 32 vehicles, including 18 ambulances, 11 para-transit vehicles, a supervisor’s vehicle, medicar and a special operations unit. Cetronia provides basic and advanced life support ambulance, para-transit, wheelchair, and stretcher van services to serve the communities emergency medical service and medical transportation needs. Cetronia Ambulance Corps is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Ambulance Services (CAAS) for its superior care, rapid response and performance excellence and is the only nationally accredited EMS agency in Eastern Pennsylvania, one of only seven in the state and one of only 144 in the nation. As the regional leader in High Performance EMS, Cetronia Ambulance Corps receives over 44,000 requests for service annually, covering an emergency service area that spans across 108 square miles and a non-emergency coverage area that encompasses seven counties. Cetronia Ambulance Corps provides Health on Wheels™ and is dedicated to saving lives and partnering with community every day.

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