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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Allegheny Energy supports Botanic Garden project**

**Hagerstown, Md., January 31, 2000** – Allegheny Energy, through its Environmental Stewardship Team, has donated funds to the Horticultural Society of Western Pennsylvania to help complete the region’s first comprehensive Botanic Garden.

The garden will be unique in its scope and focus on displays of regional flora, horticultural education, and research into botanical issues of regional importance. It will be located on the southern 400 acres of Settler’s Cabin Park, 20 minutes west of downtown Pittsburgh and 30 minutes from the West Virginia and Ohio borders.

State Representative John Pippy (R-44th District) brought the project to Allegheny’s attention.

“We are grateful for Allegheny Energy’s support of our Botanic Garden,” said Kevin McGowan, Executive Director of the Horticultural Society. “This generous donation will help us reach our goal of opening the doors of the Garden in three years.”

The Botanic Garden is expected to feature flowers, trees, and other greenery grown in a natural environment. It is envisioned by many to become a destination point for regional and national tourism, and is expected to create hundreds of job opportunities in the area.

“Allegheny Energy is extremely pleased to donate funds to help complete this outstanding project and to support the efforts of the Horticultural Society of Western Pennsylvania,” said Pamela M. Pershing, the Company’s Advisor, Strategic Environmental Management. “We will continue to support environmental stewardship activities that help make our region a better place to live and work. At Allegheny Energy, environmental stewardship is not merely words, it’s our commitment.”

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The Botanic Garden will offer a variety of informal and formal educational opportunities for all ages. One of its many purposes will be to research, develop, and exhibit sustainable plant-based solutions for environmental challenges, including those facing the western Pennsylvania community.

The site is being developed over a period of about 20 years, with the initial opening scheduled for 2003.

Allegheny Energy, Inc. is a diversified energy company headquartered in Hagerstown, Md. The Allegheny Energy family includes *Allegheny Power*, which delivers electric energy to about three million people in parts of Maryland, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia; *Allegheny Energy Supply Company, LLC*, which operates and markets competitive retail and wholesale electric generation and operates regulated electric generation for its affiliates; and *Allegheny Ventures*, which actively invests in and develops energy-related and telecommunications projects. For more information, check our web site at [www.alleghenyenergy.com](http://www.alleghenyenergy.com).