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Council Vice President Ervin, County Executive Leggett Will Help Unveil Silver Spring Heritage Trail on Saturday, April 17

They Will Join Others to Dedicate the First in Series of Signs
That Will Designate Historic Sites of Downtown Area



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ROCKVILLE, Md., April 13, 2010—Montgomery County Council Vice President Valerie Ervin, who represents Kensington, Takoma Park, Silver Spring and Wheaton, and County Executive Isiah Leggett will be among those joining Silver Spring residents, the Heritage community, members of the multi-cultural independent small business community and other representatives at 1 p.m. on Saturday, April 17, to unveil the first six of an eventual 20 signs that will create a walking tour of the historic sites of downtown Silver Spring.

The unveiling of the first sign will take place in front of the Silver Spring Regional Services Center at 8435 Georgia Ave. at the intersection of Wayne Ave originally the 1927 Masonic Temple designed by architect Howard Wright Cutler, a Silver Spring resident.

Council Vice President Ervin has been a strong advocate of establishing the Heritage Trail Signage program to help preserve and celebrate the history of evolving downtown Silver Spring. Others involved in creating the program were the Silver Spring Historical Society; the County Executive's Office; the County Council; the Silver Spring Regional Services Center; and the Historic Preservation Commission Staff.

Among those expected at the unveiling of the signs are descendants of Silver Spring's 1900s pioneers and settlers. Jim Dandy or Samuel Myers, the first African-American small business owner in Silver Spring's Central Business District, will unveil one of the signs. Mr. Dandy was recently honored 2010 with the Neil Potter Award. Members of the Lutes Family early residents of Silver Spring also are expected. Fred Lutes served as the first president of Suburban Trust Bank.

"Everyone continues to be excited about what has been created in Silver Spring thus far and what the future holds for our downtown," said Councilmember Ervin. "However, it is just as important for all of us particularly for our future generations to be aware of what stood originally and is being adaptively and creatively reused along these streets. The Heritage Trail Signage not only will make for an interesting fun walk throughout downtown Silver Spring, it also will help preserve the history of this community."

The Silver Spring Heritage Trail is the first official Montgomery County Main Street Heritage Trail. Creation of the Silver Spring Trail program was required after the 1998 demolition of the historic 1927 Silver Spring National Guard Armory on Wayne Avenue for redevelopment of the core of Silver Spring's Central Business District.

"The installation of these Heritage Trail Signs will enable the many fascinating stories of Silver Spring's creation to be easily shared with the public," said Jerry A. McCoy, founder and president of the Silver Spring Historical Society.

Georgia Avenue is one of the original main streets of Silver Spring. The Heritage Trail will enable walkers to discover the originals of the Silver Spring central business district. Signs will pinpoint sites such as the locations of the first Silver Spring newspaper (*The Maryland News*), the first department store (the Grand Leader), the first bank (Silver Spring National Bank) and the first bakery (Silver Spring Home Bakery). Many of the original structures are now home to multi-cultural small independent businesses and a variety of institutions.

“Creating the first official Montgomery County Main Street Heritage Trail was one of my earliest Council priorities, so it is gratifying to see the final result,” said Councilmember Ervin. “I want to thank the Silver Spring Historical Society, and specifically Marci Stickle, for all of their work on these amazing signs, which will enhance the Silver Spring experience.”

For more information about the Heritage Trail Signage program, contact Mr. McCoy at 301-537-1253 or at sshistory@yahoo.com or Ms. Stickle, the advocacy chair of the Silver Spring Historical Society, at 301-585-3817 or at MarciPro@aol.com.

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