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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE !!!**

### **Gehman Custom Remodeling (GCR) Oversees Construction of Spruce Lake Retreat's Nature Center**

HARLEYSVILLE, PA – JUNE 13, 2008 – Gas prices may be climbing, but that isn't stopping the field staff at Gehman Custom Remodeling (GCR) from fulfilling its volunteer commitment to overseeing the construction of Spruce Lake Retreat's Nature Center located in Canadensis, PA. GCR craftsman Merv Zook took the helm as Project Manager and since January has traveled north to the Poconos to work Thursday thru Saturday. The intended completion of the project is slated for late September.

Spruce Lake Retreat (SLR) is a place where thousands of individuals and members of church ministry groups flock each year to experience time alone with the Lord and fellowship through the setting of over 800 acres of woodlands, waterfalls and mountain streams. People from New York, New Jersey, Delaware and the Philadelphia areas come to Spruce Lake for its Christian retreat and conference center, a summer children's and youth camp program (Spruce Lake Wilderness Camp and Expeditions), and its outdoor education program (Spruce Lake Outdoor School).

SLR's Nature Center will consist of a 1,700 square foot, "green" building that will be used to house the retreat's Outdoor School. The Nature Center is part of a long-range building and facility enhancement project under the umbrella of "New Horizons". The Nature Center will be housed beneath the back deck of the Lakeview Program Center with large windows overlooking the lake.

Activities that will be conducted at the Nature Center will include Outdoor School classes, such as "Skulls and Skins," that require some indoor teaching and use of the animal artifact exhibits. Staff naturalists will introduce people to the live animals who will live in their new exhibit area with the binoculars provided. Guests can look for spring migrating birds from the new bird-watching observatory deck. In addition to Outdoor School students, guest groups and retreat program guests will also participate in what the Nature Center offers. It is wheelchair-accessible, giving Spruce Lake Retreat's guests from Joni and Friends, Christian Overcomers and other disability ministry groups the opportunity to enjoy the exhibits, the views and the classes, too.

Through Zook's ongoing efforts, Gehman Custom Remodeling took into consideration SLR's interest in green building by executing eco-friendly designs and using energy efficient materials to reduce the costs of maintaining and operating the building. Some of the "green" elements being incorporated into the construction include using recycled rubber for flooring, radiant heat flooring, fiber cement siding, and cellulose insulation. Spruce Lake Retreat has had the graces of many other helping hands on the project. New Jersey-based architect and seasonal camper Michael Campbell donated his time creating drawings for the Nature Center. Brent Clemens of I.T. Landes in Harleysville donated his time in the service of HVAC engineering. Other volunteers on the job included Retreat Center guests, work group participants, and friends of the camp including board members.

The divine union between Gehman Custom Remodeling and Spruce Lake Retreat began when the Franconia Mennonite Conference opened the center back in 1963. As a teenager GCR President Dennis Gehman spent his summers at the Wilderness Camp while his Mother was the camp cook. Gehman maintained his interest as he became a camp counselor from 1973 to 1977, volunteered on maintenance and building projects from 1976 to 1977, served as a board member from 1996 to 2005, as well as President of the board from 1999 to 2005. He continues his involvement as a member of the building committee. Spruce Lake is a place where he camps frequently with his family. "I'm so blessed that I am able to use my passion and gifts to advance the mission of an organization I have so much respect for that is truly spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ," said Gehman.

Merv Zook, a former Earth Science teacher with Souderton Area School District for 27 years, has been vacationing at Spruce Lake Retreat since it opened in 1963. "When my children were young, what a deal it was to take a family camping trip there on just \$50 for the week," Zook reminisces and chuckles. His interest in the ministry as well as in green building and living made him the ideal candidate to oversee the job. Zook also had prior experience in ministry construction as he took a 7-month sabbatical to help build his place of worship, Perkiomenville Mennonite Church.

"I'm blown away and at times overwhelmed by the support, commitment and dedication to this project, shown by Merv Zook and Gehman Remodelers," said Outdoor School Director Lisa Ferrer. I am excited with the facility and the greater quality of educational experiences it will provide to this ministry. The Outdoor School staff and I are pleased to know this facility incorporates some of the stewardship values we strongly believe in as we teach about God's awesomeness seen through his creation. For Merv Zook and Gehman Remodelers and all the volunteers who have made this possible, a mere thank you is not enough!" For information on the progress of this project and how Gehman Custom Remodeling continues to enhance what they already have to offer, check them out at [www.sprucelake.org](http://www.sprucelake.org).

Gehman Custom Remodeling has been offering full service Design Build Remodeling throughout southeastern Pennsylvania since 1990. Offices and showroom for GCR are located in a national award winning 1870s renovated barn on Main Street in Harleysville. They are a member of the National Kitchen & Bath Association (NKBA), National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI), and the Better Business Bureau, as well as the Indian Valley Chamber of Commerce and North Penn Chamber of Commerce.

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