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WILLIAM RAU PHOTOGRAPHS RETURN TO SAMA-ALTOONA

Altoona – The Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art at Altoona is pleased to announce the opening of its latest exhibition, *William H. Rau: Panorama Portraits of Travel*. On view June 1 through June 23, the exhibition will feature 30 albumen and sepia-toned photographs from the Altoona Area Public Library Collection that capture the harmony of nature and the industrial landscape along the Pennsylvania Railroad, from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh.

Rau was perhaps best known as the official photographer for the Pennsylvania Railroad. He was first commissioned by the Railroad in 1891 to document the scenic views along the mainline in order to promote the railroad and increase passenger traffic. His photographs not only glorified rail travel and the progress made by the Industrial Revolution, but also helped legitimize photography as a major art form.

The photographs in *Panorama Portraits of Travel* have been selected by guest curator Stan Snyder, SAMA-Altoona Administrative Assistant, for both their artistic and historical significance. Through the exhibition, the viewer will take a trip along the PRR and witness the scenic splendor of Pennsylvania's landscape as it was more than 100 years ago. Rau's work played a vital role in shaping the perception of the American landscape in the late 19th century.

"The public will be inspired by the panoramic photographs as though they were traveling in time with Rau," said Snyder. "As landscape portraits, each photo is identifiable by its location's environmental personality as captured by the photographer's perspective. The viewer will become a passenger as Rau captures the aesthetic beauty of each panoramic portrait along the rail lines from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh."

The Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art at Altoona is located in the Brett Building at 1210 Eleventh Avenue. Hours of operation are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and 1 to 5 p.m. Saturdays. The Museum is a handicapped-accessible facility and is open to the public free of charge. For more information, call the Museum or visit www.sama-art.org.

The Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art receives state arts funding support through a grant from the Pennsylvania Council for the Arts, a state agency funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.