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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Glass Workers Archives Move to Weston, WV Museum

Weston, WV – The Museum of American Glass in Weston, West Virginia has acquired the contents of the American Flint Glass Workers Union archives and museum. Included are historic documents, photographs, collective bargaining agreements, convention proceedings, plaques and numerous other mementos. In addition there are volumes of trade publications going back to the 1880s that contain articles and ads that trace the development of the glass industry.

The archives had been stored in the union's building in Toledo, Ohio where some of the material was put into a museum-like exhibit in 1978 to celebrate the union's 100th Anniversary. Credit for establishing and expanding the display goes to union officers George M. Parker and Robert Newell. But even before the display was assembled, the glass industry in the US was in decline and thus so was union membership. As a result it became necessary for the AFGWU to merge with the United Steel Workers in 2003 and the Flints, as they were called, ceased as an independent organization. Yet the archives remained in Toledo until the building was sold and everything had to be removed by late February 2009. Within about two weeks' time, volunteers packed furiously and glass collectors donated money to at least begin to cover the cost of the expensive move to Weston.

The collection is now in the good hands of the museum's archivist Tom Felt who joined MAGWV upon retiring from the Library of Congress. Mr. Felt is well known in glass circles for his scholarly research and writing. In commenting about the acquisition he said, "(The collection) not only has extraordinary value to those of us who collect glass, but considering that the AFGWU was the oldest independent labor organization in the

United States prior to its merger with the United Steel Workers, it has similar importance to the history of labor in the country.”

Dean Six, Museum Director, is delighted that the museum is providing a safe haven for this “major academic archive (and) a serious piece of American History”. He says it fits well with the museum’s mission which is to “discover, publish and preserve whatever may relate to the glass industry in West Virginia, the United States of America or where ever else glass has been manufactured.” Mr. Six assures that visitors to the museum will be able to see this valuable collection and researchers will have access to stored records.

Donations to assist in the preservation of these records are tax deductible and may be sent to the Museum of American Glass in West Virginia, P.O. Box 574, Weston, WV 26451 or visit the website at <http://wvmag.bglances.com>.

The Museum of American Glass in West Virginia is open year round noon to 4:00pm daily except Wednesday, Sunday and major holidays. Admission is free. It is easily accessible off I-79 exit 99 onto US 33 West for two miles to Main Avenue. A left turn onto Main and the museum is on the left at 230 Main Avenue. Begun in 1992, the museum relocated to its present location in 2007 and occupies 14,000 square feet with over 7,000 pieces of glass on permanent display. More information can be found at <http://wvmag.bglances.com/>. Questions about programs or the museum can be directed to 304-269-5006.

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