



NEWS RELEASE From Mayor Dean DePiero

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**Contact: Jack P. Marschall
(440) 885-8181 or (216) 346-9935 (cell)**

PARMA IS THE NEW HOME FOR ANNUAL POLISH PARADE AND FESTIVAL

(PARMA) – The City of Parma has become the new permanent home of the annual Polish Constitution parade that traditionally has been held in Slavic Village in Cleveland. The parade will be held on Polish Constitution Day, the first Sunday in May. This year’s date is May 2. Cleveland’s legendary “Big Chuck” Schodowski will serve as the parade’s grand marshal.

“Parma is honored to become the new host city for this traditionally ethnic event, said Parma Mayor Dean DePiero. “As many folks know, our area is historically rich in ethnic diversity. To say it’s a good fit for the Cleveland Society of Poles and the Polish community of Greater Cleveland would be an understatement.”

The Cleveland Society of Poles in partnership with the Union of Poles, the Alliance of Poles and the Ohio Division of the Polish American Congress considered moving the annual parade after continued dwindling attendance at the Slavic Village event. Organizers say Parma was considered among the best alternate locations because of its longtime Polish ethnic roots.

“Many of our Polish people are no longer attending the Slavic Village parade,” said John Borkowski, president of the Ohio Division of the Polish American Congress, the umbrella organization for the region's Polish American groups. “There's only a handful of people standing on the sides watching our parade. We felt it was time to move the event, and Parma was the best choice of all.”

The annual march celebrates Europe's first modern constitution and has long been a catalyst for celebrations and reunions in the ethnic halls of Slavic Village. Borkowski calls the move to Parma “exciting” and says the change makes sense for Poles across Greater Cleveland.

“Many of our friends and relatives have roots in both Cleveland and Parma,” said Borkowski. “Our intention is to increase attendance by changing locations. The move will instill a greater awareness of our Polish heritage of which we are so proud.”

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The Parma parade will feature numerous Polish associations from Greater Cleveland including Polish veteran groups, Polish dancers, members of the Cleveland Polka Association and representatives of the Cleveland Society of Poles and its affiliate organizations. Local elected officials plan to march along the parade route.

In addition, all five area high school marching bands will participate including those from Parma Senior High School, Valley Forge High School, Normandy High School, Padua Franciscan High School and Holy Name High School.

“This is a celebration of independence,” said Mayor DePiero. “It is a great opportunity for residents of all ethnic backgrounds to join us.”

The Polish Constitution Day parade will begin at 2:00 p.m. It will proceed along Ridge Road, starting at Essen Avenue and ending at Parma City Hall. A program commemorating the signing of the Polish Constitution in 1791 will be held following the parade.

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