PRESS RELEASE – 09/28/08 **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Kobrin Synagogue Restoration Project

The restored Kobrin Synagogue will provide a place for Jewish worship and study for local residents, and house a Holocaust and Jewish history museum.

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A very important project has been started that will restore the former Great Kobrin Synagogue. Kobrin, a town in the former Grodno Gubernia of the Russian Empire, then in Poland between World War I and II, is today located in Belarus. A website has been created that describes this exciting new project. This website was developed by David Goldberg whose ancestors were from this area and the link is: http://www.kobrinsynagogue.org/index.asp

For many decades this building has been abandoned. A few years ago, the local Kobrin authorities gave back to the Jewish community of Belarus the building of the former "Great" synagogue in Kobrin. In addition, the local administration exempted this property from annual taxes.

The current project is being led by Yuri Dorn, President of the Jewish Heritage Research Group (JHRG) based in Minsk, whose website is www.jhrgbelarus.org. The JHRG has met with Rabbi Avraam Benenson - Chief Rabbi of the Union of Religious Jewish Congregations of Belarus, Rabbi Chaim Rabinovich - Rabbi of Brest, Yuri Kaplan - Head of the Kobrin Jewish Community and Galina Burdyko - Vice-Mayor of Kobrin. Planning for the synagogue restoration includes a building that can be used simultaneously for two purposes:

- A place where local Jews can gather together to pray, study and celebrate Shabbat and Jewish holidays
- Create a Holocaust and Jewish history museum of Kobrin and surrounds, which can be visited by tourists, local residents and students as a part of their academic curriculum.

Given the lack of any Jewish synagogues in the area, it is envisioned that the synagogue will draw from an area that includes the towns of: Antopol, Brest, Bereza, Chomsk, Chernyany, Chernyavchitzy, Divin, Domachevo, Drogichin, Gorodetz, Ivanovo (Yanovo), Kamenetz, Kobrin, Logishin, Malech, Motol, Pinsk, Pruzhany, Seletz, Shereshevo, Telehany, Tomashevka, Volchin, Vysokoe and Zhabinka.

The American Friends of Byelorussian Jews Charitable Trust (AFBJ), registered with the state of Ohio under Section 501 (c) (3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code, will act as the fiscal agent and will oversee the project. The AFBJ is an independent, non-profit tax-exempt Charitable Trust. All drawings and designs will have to go through a building committee that checks the Halachic, legal and engineering side of any project before approving the transfer of any funds. All contributions to this project will be fully tax-deductible for U.S. taxpayers.

For more information, please contact Yuri Dorn belshtetl@yahoo.com.