Revitalization tool almost lost

In 1984, President Ronald Reagan signed legislation providing federal tax credits for the restoration of older buildings for use as offices, stores, and apartments.

No single act has done more to revitalize older cities and towns as this incentive. The National Trust for Historic Preservation has estimated 40,000 historic buildings have been restored, creating jobs for 2 million people in the process.

And as people filled these buildings, they brought new life to forsaken downtowns and nearby neighborhoods.

Here in Pottstown, a whole panoply of magnificent buildings have been restored for offices and housing, thanks to the tax credit, such as the Pottstown Roller Mill, the Reading Passenger Station, the former Vaughn Knitting Mills (now community college classrooms), the Ecker Warehouse, the Sweet-Orr clothing factory, the Light Foundry, and many others.

Guess whose congressman voted to abolish the historic tax credit (which, fortunately, was retained, thanks to the Senate)?

Ours — Ryan Costello. Does our congressman know anything about Pottstown’s assets, and how to build on them?

Commentary by Thomas Hylton

The Security Trust Building, whose upper floors had been vacant since the 1960s, was restored in 2006. Historic tax credits helped finance the $4 million project.