



**For immediate release
April 14, 2009**

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DCR'S NATIONAL MONUMENT TO THE FOREFATHERS COMPETING FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION GRANT

Cast your vote for Faith!

The Department of Conservation and Recreation's (DCR) National Monument to the Forefathers in Plymouth is among 25 historic sites in the Boston area chosen to compete for a national historic preservation grant.

In a press conference today at Faneuil Hall in Boston, the National Trust for Historic Preservation and American Express announced their commitment to award a total of \$1 million in preservation grants to 10 of those 25 projects. The National Monument to the Forefathers will compete with the other projects for the grants, and funding will be awarded based on the results of online voting by members of the public and other criteria.

The project with the most votes is guaranteed a grant. The remaining funding will be divided among the grantees, with public support being one of the selection criteria.

Voting starts today at www.partnersinpreservation.com and ends May 17.

When the National Trust for Historic Preservation and American Express launched their Partners in Preservation program in 2006, American Express pledged \$5.5 million over five years to preserve historic places across the country. Each year, a different city has been chosen to participate. Previous cities have been San Francisco, Chicago, and New Orleans.

"Historic preservation not only protects our heritage, it also stimulates the economy by creating jobs in travel and tourism throughout the Commonwealth," said Governor Deval L. Patrick, cochairman of the Partners in Preservation Advisory Committee.

"We are delighted to have one of DCR's historic monuments chosen for this program," said DCR Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan Jr. "I urge everyone to cast their vote for Faith."

Faith is the main figure on the National Monument to the Forefathers. The 81-foot-tall monument, built in the mid-1800s, also includes smaller representations of Morality, Liberty, Education, and Law. Faith, the main figure, stands 36 feet tall on the 45-foot base.

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If the National Monument to the Forefathers is selected to receive a grant, DCR will use the funds to hire a qualified conservator or mason to clean, repoint, and repair the Faith figure. The solid granite monument has been exposed to the harsh climate of Plymouth Harbor for more than 100 years, and needs to be cleaned and repaired. The last cleaning was in the 1980s.

The monument, with its five figures, represents the value of the Pilgrims. It was built at a time when this country was divided by the Civil War and the nation's future was uncertain. The choice of the Pilgrim allegory, combined with the colossal scale of the monument, created a symbol of hope for national unity. The monument was designed by Boston artist Hammatt Billings.

The public is invited to vote online for their favorite historic places. The winner of the popular vote is guaranteed funding. Additional grants will be awarded on June 16 to nine of the other sites after review by American Express, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and an advisory committee made up of greater Boston civic and preservation leaders and cochaired by Governor Patrick and Boston Mayor Thomas Menino.

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The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), an agency of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, oversees 450,000 acres of parks and forests, beaches, bike trails, watersheds, and dams, in addition to 278 bridges and miles of roadways. Led by Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan Jr., the agency's mission is to protect, promote, and enhance our common wealth of natural, cultural, and recreational resources. To learn more about DCR, our facilities, and our programs, please visit www.mass.gov/dcr. Contact us at mass.parks@state.ma.us.