



**For immediate release  
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## **SCHOONER ERNESTINA RETURNS TO MASSACHUSETTS**

*Official vessel of the Commonwealth will make stops in Gloucester and Boston  
en route to New Bedford*

The Department of Conservation and Recreation's (DCR) schooner Ernestina, the official vessel of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, recently completed extensive renovations at the Boothbay Harbor Shipyard in Maine.

Weather and sea conditions permitting, Ernestina will leave Boothbay Harbor on Tuesday, May 5, and head back to the ship's home port of New Bedford. The schooner will have a half dozen crew members from the shipyard, and will be powered by its own 350 horsepower marine diesel engine.

"It will be great to have Ernestina back in the Commonwealth," said DCR Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan Jr. "And the fact that this 115-year-old ship is coming back here under its own power is quite exciting."

Paul Brawley, DCR's executive director of the ship, and Harold Burnham, an 11<sup>th</sup> generation Master Shipwright from Essex, oversaw the repairs to ensure work followed US Coast Guard standards as well as the Department of the Interior's Standards for Historic Vessel Preservation Projects.

The repairs, which involved a rehabilitation of the front half of the vessel above the waterline, were funded by a \$500,000 Save America's Treasures grant administered by the National Park Service, Department of the Interior, matched with \$500,000 from DCR's Partnerships Matching Funds Program and donations from the general public.

Ernestina is scheduled to leave Boothbay Harbor on Tuesday, May 5, and arrive in Gloucester at the Maritime Heritage center the following day, Wednesday, May 6, at noon.

According to the schedule, Ernestina will leave Gloucester Thursday morning, May 7, and arrive at Rowes Wharf in Boston that day at noon. The schooner will go through the Cape Cod Canal on Friday, May 8, between 12:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m., and will anchor off the coast overnight. On Saturday, May 9, at noon, Ernestina will arrive at New Bedford State Pier, where a welcoming ceremony is planned.

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS · EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

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Built in 1894 in Essex, Ernestina (originally named Effie M. Morrissey) is the official vessel of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, a National Historic Landmark, and part of New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park.

The ship was famous as a Grand Banks fishing schooner, an Arctic exploration vessel that came within 578 miles of the North Pole, a U.S. Naval vessel in World War II, and as a Cape Verde trans-Atlantic packet that was the last sailing vessel in regular service to bring immigrants to this country. More recently, the schooner was a sail training, education vessel for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

In 1982, the Republic of Cape Verde, with financial support from Friends of Ernestina/Morrissey, restored Ernestina and presented the ship as a gift to the people of the United States and ultimately to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Ernestina is the oldest surviving Grand Banks fishing schooner, one of two surviving 19th-century Essex-built Gloucester fishing schooners, and is one of only two Arctic exploration sailing vessels left afloat in the United States.

DCR continues to work closely with the Schooner Ernestina Commission to ensure the ship is preserved and protected and can continue to provide educational programs in history, the environment, culture and other areas to more than 10,000 children and adults annually.

For more information on the Schooner Ernestina, visit [www.mass.gov/dcr/parks/southeast/schern.htm](http://www.mass.gov/dcr/parks/southeast/schern.htm).

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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](http://www.mass.gov/dcr). Contact us at [mass.parks@state.ma.us](mailto:mass.parks@state.ma.us).*

