



## ESSEX NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Essex National Heritage Commission Holds Annual Fall Meeting at the Cape Ann Museum in Gloucester, MA**

*New Commissioners Welcomed, Special Awards Given Out, Regional Initiatives Discussed, and results of a national study on Heritage Areas show high performance in Essex County*

**September 5, 2013 (Salem, MA)**—The Essex National Heritage Commission (Essex Heritage) welcomed 140 business and community leaders from around Essex County to its Annual Meeting, on Thursday, September 5. The meeting was hosted by Gloucester's Cape Ann Museum. The business portion of the session focused on the importance of sustaining the region through youth engagement, partnership projects and regional support. Members elected new members of the Commission and Essex Heritage announced the recipients of the 2013 Essex Heritage Awards.

Attendees were welcomed by Carolyn A. Kirk, Mayor of the City of Gloucester; Massachusetts Sen. Bruce E. Tarr; and Ronda Faloon, Director of the Cape Ann Museum

#### **New Essex Heritage Commissioners are appointed**

Essex Heritage is supported by a 150-member Board of Commissioners who live and/or work within Essex County and who serve as representatives of the communities, businesses, community organizations, educational institutions and historic, cultural and natural resources of the region. The following eight individuals were nominated and voted in to serve as Commissioners for a three-year term:

- Karen Andreas, The Salem News
- Paula Brown, Daughters of the American Revolution
- Cheryl Cahill, Rowley Jewell Mill
- Gary Coon, Major League Investments
- Arend de Jong, RenewThink
- Deborah Pesanti Payson, Marblehead Chamber of Commerce
- Gin Wallace, Beverly Main Streets
- Michael Ward, Insight Performance

#### **Six new Essex Heritage Trustees begin three-year terms**

- Tom Alexander, attorney at Alexander and Femino in Beverly
- Jane Baugh, an active volunteer in Ipswich and with the DAR
- Tim Felter, senior VP and CFO at Newburyport Five Cents Savings Bank
- John Keohane, president and owner of Henry's Market of Beverly
- Nat Pulsifer, principal at Pulsifer & Associates in Ipswich

(more)

- Rosario Ubiera-Minaya, executive director of the Salem Education Foundation.

Other dignitaries in attendance included: former Peabody Mayor Michael Bonfanti; Ipswich Town Manager Robin Crosbie; Molly Gachignard with Massachusetts Rep. John D. Keenan; Topsfield Selectman Dick Gandt; Salisbury Town Manager Neil Harrington; and Massachusetts Senator Joan Lovely.

### **Past President Richard Yagjian offers thanks and announces results of national evaluation**

After thanking organizations and individuals for their support of Essex Heritage, Past President Richard Yagjian summarized the results of an independent evaluation of Essex Heritage's work commissioned by the National Park Service and released this summer to the US Congress. According to the key findings identified in the "*Evaluation of The Essex National Heritage Commission Findings Report*" prepared by the Center for Park Management, Essex Heritage has successfully met its mandate in several very important ways:-

- Essex Heritage has been successful in engaging our citizens, local organizations and communities in heritage conservation;
- Essex Heritage has fostered regional relationships, projects, and activities that preserve resources across the geographic landscape of the heritage area;
- Furthermore, the organization has provided great experiences for both residents and visitors to enjoy, learn about and protect the unique resources and opportunities in our national heritage area.

The evaluation goes on to report that Essex Heritage has performed valuable services within our heritage area by:

- Developing educational programs that highlight the significance of the area;
- Enhancing and expanding the existing network of regional routes, trails, and signage;
- Establishing a constituency for preservation and conservation.

### **Incoming President Jack Good cites accomplishments**

Essex Heritage President Jack Good, of People's Bank, spoke about the history of the Essex National Heritage Area and the vital role Essex Heritage plays in the 500-square-mile region as a leader in building coalitions for conservation, preservation and educational programs and projects. Thanking Essex Heritage's many corporate and individual members, Mr. Good noted that this broad-based regional support is critical to the success of long-term projects such as the Border to Boston Rail Trail, the Coastal Scenic Byway, and ongoing heritage-based educational and job programs for underserved youth.

"We believe that we can improve and sustain our shared natural, historical, and cultural resources only if we work together," said Mr. Good. "The key is harnessing the power of so many partners to sustain our region – a region whose treasures, if lost, can never be regained."

### **Special recognition for two board members whose terms are ending this year:**

Good recognized two outgoing members of the Board of Trustees for their long and valuable service to Essex Heritage and its regional work.

**Nancy Huntington Stager**, Executive VP, Human Resources and Charitable Giving at Eastern Bank, who served as Essex Heritage's President from 2007 to 2009, has been instrumental in increasing the non-governmental support of Essex Heritage and its work in the region.

**John Meserve**, Essex Heritage treasurer and President and CEO of the Merrimac Savings Bank, has served as Treasurer and Chair of the Audit committee for the past five years and has ensured the organization is on sound financial footing.

Mr. Good gave thanks by honoring **Wayne Burton**, retiring president of North Shore Community College. Dr. Burton served on the Essex Heritage Board of Trustees for many years before becoming Trustee Emeritus. Throughout the years he has been a great friend and tireless advocate for Essex Heritage, while simultaneously giving many years of service to North Shore Community College and to this region.

### **Pioneer in Partnership Awards 2013**

Each year the Essex National Heritage Commission presents its Pioneer in Partnership Awards to individuals and organizations who exemplify the Commission's spirit of collaboration. The award recognizes those who build partnerships and celebrate the historic, cultural and natural resources of Essex County.

As a prelude to the awards, Essex Heritage Chief Operating Officer Bill Steelman paid tribute to Colleen Bruce, a 31-year veteran of the National Park Service, was 60 years old when she passed away in May. In a region that celebrates its maritime heritage, people often become synonymous with the vessels they tend. Such was the case with Colleen and the tall ship *Friendship*. In her role as the first maritime division chief of Salem Maritime National Historic Site, Colleen was tireless and passionate in her care of the ship. Said Essex Heritage CEO Annie Harris: "It became her baby; she was really the keeper of the ship."

Mr. Steelman presented the following Pioneer in Partnership Awards:

- 1) The Gloucester Community Development Department, for its development of the Gloucester HarborWalk. Deftly melding a nationally significant heritage-inspired civic design and museum quality technology, Gloucester's Community Development Department has overseen the creation of an award-winning, 1.5-mile pathway that leads the curious on a journey of discovery through the city's downtown commercial district to its numerous cultural sites and its well-known working waterfront.
- 2) Groundwork Lawrence, for developing the Spicket River Greenway. More than decade in the making and representing a combined investment of over \$10 million, the Spicket River Greenway is a 3.5-mile network of urban green spaces and walking paths paralleling the Spicket River in northern Lawrence. Much more than a ribbon of asphalt, no fewer than six urban parks were created or rehabilitated, two of which were former brownfield sites.
- 3) The Ipswich ReCreation and Culture Department and J.T. Turner, for educating the public about the role and legacy of Ipswich history through the creation and production of the theatrical performance *Within These Walls*. The popular adage, "Go big or go home" could easily be applied to the creative partnership that has developed between Kerrie Bates, director of the Ipswich ReCreation and Culture Department, and local playwright, actor and director J. T Turner. Their collective ambitions took them all the way to Washington, D.C., where their performance of "Within These Walls" was staged at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History in August.
- 4) Danvers Park Rangers Dave and Joan Townley, for their long-term stewardship of Endicott Park. For the past 42 years, Chief Ranger Dave Townley has served the Town of Danvers as the Director at Endicott Park, a 165-acre heritage landscape that includes pastoral views, historic farm buildings, orchards, woodlands, and marshes and a network of trails and gravel roads. Dave's partner in business and life, Joan Townley, completed the team when she became a Park Ranger 15 years ago after many years as a volunteer in the Park.
- 5) Thacher Island Association, for its work preserving both the Thacher Island and Straitsmouth Light Stations. Drawing upon its successful experience at Thacher Island, the Association has embarked on a long-term project to stabilize the Straitsmouth Island Light. Built in 1898, the lighthouse has been a watch list of endangered lighthouses since 1990. Overall since 1999, the Association has raised more than \$2.5 million for the restoration

of three towers, three keeper's houses, a museum, fog signal building and a numbers of other structures. Most have been restored to their original mid-1800s condition.

### **Two weekends of free Trails & Sails events begin Sept. 20**

Mr. Good also reminded the meeting participants of the upcoming *Trails & Sails: Two Weekends of Walks & Water*, Essex Heritage's premier region-wide event—held on the last two weekends of September. Now in its 12<sup>th</sup> year, *Trails & Sails* is actually made up of nearly 150 unique events hosted at more than 100 sites including hikes, kayak tours, special demonstrations, museum tours – and more – all offered for **FREE**.

### **A "State of the Heritage Area" report by CEO Annie Harris**

Essex Heritage CEO Annie Harris highlighted the local and national efforts to promote and encourage Heritage Areas. Ms. Harris described the national significance of this region, and talked about the importance of the Essex National Heritage Area in protecting our historic, natural and cultural treasures. Ms. Harris spoke about the unparalleled resources in this region. The Essex National Heritage Area has within its boundaries:

- The first integrated ironworks in North America
- The oldest continuously operating museum
- The oldest working boat shop
- The oldest independent school in the nation (Governor's Academy 1763)
- The oldest cultivated fruit tree

The area is rich in manmade and natural resources, including 9,968 sites on the National Register of Historic Places, 73 National Register Historic Districts, 26 National Historic Landmarks, 86 historical sites and museums open to the public, 400 farms, nine state parks, two units of the National Park Service and one National Wildlife Refuge.

"The real importance of the Essex National Heritage Area lies not in our being first or best in historical events—but in what remains today," said CEO Annie C. Harris. "It is our mission to knit this region together, to help people make connections between their lives and these sites, and to engage the larger public in sustaining these places."

The economic impact of the Essex Heritage work on the region is strong and meaningful, added Ms. Harris, citing a recent study conducted by TrippUmbach, a nationally recognized consulting firm, engaged by the National Park Service to study the economic impact of the National Heritage Areas across the United States. In their study on *The Economic Impact of National Heritage Areas* (February, 2013), they conclude that the annual national economic effect of the National Heritage Areas is \$12.9 billion in economic activity which supports approximately 148,000 jobs and \$1.2 billion annually in Federal taxes.

"It is our experience that heritage preservation and jobs go hand-in-hand," explained Ms. Harris. "Strong economies occur in places where there is deep community pride and dedicated stewardship."

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#### **About Essex Heritage (Essex National Heritage Commission)**

The Essex National Heritage Area encompasses the 34 cities and towns of Essex County, a 500 square mile region just north of Boston, Massachusetts. The county was officially designated a National Heritage Area by an Act of the U.S. Congress in 1996, in recognition of the important role that the county played in American history and the significant heritage resources that still exist in the region. The Act also authorized the establishment of the Essex National Heritage Commission as the non-profit steward of the Area. Working in collaboration with the National Park Service and other partners, Essex Heritage promotes public/private partnerships and develops and implements programs that preserve, promote and enhance regional awareness of the unique historic, cultural and natural resources found within the Area. For more information, visit the website at [www.essexheritage.org](http://www.essexheritage.org) or call (978) 740-0444.