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POLI'S PALACE THEATRE, WORCESTER, APPROVED FOR NOMINATION TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Secretary of the Commonwealth William Francis Galvin is pleased to announce that the Massachusetts Historical Commission approved Poli's Palace Theatre in Worcester for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places at its September 8, 2010, meeting. The nomination will be submitted to the National Register of Historic Places at the National Park Service in Washington, DC, for final consideration and designation.

"The Massachusetts Historical Commission is dedicated to preserving the Commonwealth's rich architectural, cultural, archaeological, and historic resources," Secretary Galvin said. "Inclusion of Poli's Palace Theatre in the National Register will help to preserve an excellent example of a 'palace' theater, and will ensure its prominent role in Worcester's cultural life for generations to come."

Poli's Palace Theatre consists of the former 1904 Franklin Square Theater façade and entrance lobby, the 1926 Classical Revival interior designed by internationally renowned architect Thomas W. Lamb, and an entrance lobby and stage extension constructed in 2008. The terra-cotta Beaux Arts façade, uncovered in the 2008 restoration, includes its original upper-story arch adorned with shields, wreaths, ribbons, and sea monster heads. The 1926 interior exemplifies a palace-type theater, a vast, luxurious space built for vaudeville performances and motion picture shows. Sylvester A. Poli, owner of a large and successful New England theater chain, bought the Franklin Street Theater in 1912, and commissioned Lamb to redesign it in 1926. During the heyday of palace theaters in the 1910s and 1920s, Lamb was one of North America's most popular palace designers in the country, responsible for at least 300 such theaters. The rehabilitated theater interior retains original features including Ionic columns, mirrored wall panels, and three restored crystal chandeliers, all of which reflect the opulent air that helped distinguish this as the city's largest and most deluxe theater until the mid-1960s. The theater was bought in 2002 by Worcester Center for Performing Arts, a nonprofit organization that raised funds for the building's 2008 restoration. Now called the Hanover Theatre, it functions as a center for performing arts and films.

Poli's Palace Theatre is one of 8 historic resources around the Commonwealth approved for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places by the Massachusetts Historical Commission at this meeting.

Secretary Galvin serves as Chairman of the 17-member board, which meets regularly and considers historic resources eligible for the National Register four times a year.

The National Register is the nation's official listing of significant historic resources. In Massachusetts, there are over 70,000 properties listed in the National Register. The Massachusetts Historical Commission has been administering the National Register of Historic Places program in Massachusetts since 1966.

The Massachusetts Historical Commission is the office of the State Historic Preservation Officer and the State Archaeologist. It was established in 1963 to identify, evaluate, and protect important historical and archaeological assets of the Commonwealth. Visit our website to learn more about the Commission's programs (www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc).

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