



William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth

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**FRANKLIN COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS, GREENFIELD, 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 the Franklin County Fairgrounds in Greenfield for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places at its March 9, 2011, 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 the Franklin County Fairgrounds in the National Register affirms the importance of this property to the area’s agricultural and social history.”

The Franklin County Fairgrounds is located at the southwestern outskirts of Greenfield, on an elevated plateau on the south side of the Green River. One of the oldest, largest, and most intact fairgrounds in Massachusetts, the fairgrounds has been on its current site in Greenfield since 1876. The Franklin County Agricultural Society has sponsored the Franklin County Fair since 1850. The fairgrounds is also significant for the role it played in the organized movement for agricultural improvement in the 19th century, as well as the continuation of providing information and incentives to farmers to adopt progressive agricultural practices. The oldest building on the property is an exhibition building known as The Roundhouse, which was erected at the fair’s semi-centennial in 1899, and is a distinctive, 2-story, circular-plan building. The stuccoed wood-frame, Mission-style entrance gate, built in 1917, consists of two 3-story towers flanking an archway and porticulis. Both buildings were designed and sponsored by prominent Greenfield businessman Frank Orrin Wells. The fairgrounds also includes: a half-mile, oval, dirt racetrack; a number of permanent exhibition and concession buildings; a paved midway aligned with the track’s northern stretch; and large open areas north of the midway and in the center of the track, in which temporary concessions and amusements are set up during fair time and other events. The Franklin County Agricultural Society continues to maintain the fairgrounds, and hosts the Franklin County Fair during four days in early September.

The Franklin County Fairgrounds is one of 7 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
State House, Room 337, Boston, Massachusetts 02133

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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