



William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth

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**SECRETARY GALVIN TO PRESENT 2011 HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARD TO
ROCKPORT COMMUNITY HOUSE, ROCKPORT**

Secretary of the Commonwealth William Francis Galvin, Chairman of the Massachusetts Historical Commission, announces the selection of the Rockport Community House in Rockport, to receive a 2011 Massachusetts Historical Commission Historic Preservation Award.

“The Massachusetts Historical Commission is proud to recognize the extraordinary accomplishments of this year’s awardees,” said Secretary Galvin. “The projects the Commission is recognizing this year are particularly diverse and represent the many creative ways that significant historic resources are being preserved across the Commonwealth. I commend the Town of Rockport for restoring the Community House and ensuring its preservation for future generations.”

The Rockport Community House, also known as Old Rockport High School, is a wood-frame, 2 ½-story Victorian building. Constructed in 1865, the building served as the town’s first high school, and also as an elementary school starting in 1869, until 1925 when a new high school was built. After the building had been vacant for four years, the Rockport Garden Club led an initiative to use it as the town’s community house. The building is listed individually in the National Register of Historic Places, and is also located within the Broadway Local Historic District. The restoration and rehabilitation of the Rockport Community House resulted from an effort to bring the entire building into current compliance with applicable codes, as well as to adapt it for use by the Rockport Council on Aging. The original main entry opening was preserved, and a new, accessible door that closely matched the original doors was installed. The entry on the west façade was enlarged to provide accessibility, and also has a new door that closely matches the original. Sloped walkways and stairs, designed to minimize visual impact while providing accessibility to all users, were added to the south and west entries. On the interior, the majority of the original wood floors were preserved and refinished, with marks from school desks and chairs still visible. In addition, the original horsehair plaster, wood trim, and wood wainscoting were kept and reused when possible, and new paneling and wainscoting match the original.

This is the 33rd year of MHC’s Preservation Awards program. Projects are considered annually for awards in the categories of Rehabilitation and Restoration, Adaptive Reuse, Education and Outreach, Archaeology, Stewardship, and Landscape Preservation. Individuals are considered in the categories of Individual Lifetime Achievement and Local Preservationist. Secretary Galvin serves as the chair of the 17-member Massachusetts Historical Commission.

Secretary Galvin will present the awards at an afternoon ceremony on May 25, 2011, at the Massachusetts Archives Building at 220 Morrissey Blvd., Dorchester. The Rockport Community House restoration project is one of 9 projects, individuals, and organizations to be honored.

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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State House, Room 337, Boston, Massachusetts 02133