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STETSON HALL, RANDOLPH, 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 Stetson Hall in Randolph for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places at its September 14, 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 historic, architectural, archaeological, and cultural resources,” Secretary Galvin said. “Inclusion of Stetson Hall in the National Register will help to recognize this building’s well-preserved historic character.”

Stetson Hall, 6 South Main Street, is the most monumental example of the Greek Revival style extant in Randolph. The 2 ½-story, temple-front building’s façade dominates the streetscape of North Main Street. Stetson Hall was built in 1842 with funds from Major Amasa Stetson, a Randolph native and successful Boston boot manufacturer who participated in the expedition against Shays’ Rebellion and was also elected State Senator. Major Stetson’s donation included an endowment, known as the Stetson School Fund, to establish a boys’ academy—which later became the co-educational Stetson High School—and for the administration of the building. Stetson High School occupied the rear portion of the building until early 1909, when the town opened a new high school building at 41 South Main Street. Stetson Hall also served as the seat of local government for more than 150 years, and was the center of local cultural life. By the late 20th century, Stetson Hall was no longer needed for municipal offices. The 1909 high school had been replaced by the present Randolph High School on Memorial Parkway, and town offices moved into the vacant 1909 school. The town then had the opportunity to return Stetson Hall to its historic configuration and function as a community building. The Trustees of the Stetson School Fund developed a reuse plan for Stetson Hall, and from 1996 to 2009 the building underwent extensive rehabilitation and restoration, for which it won a 2010 Massachusetts Historical Commission Preservation Award. The town continues to own Stetson Hall. The Trustees of the Stetson School Fund operate the building and coordinate rentals of the first-floor offices and the upstairs hall, with a view toward developing the property as a community and regional center for the arts and as a location for special events.

Stetson Hall 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 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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