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**HEATH CENTER HISTORIC DISTRICT (BOUNDARY INCREASE) APPROVED FOR
NOMINATION TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

Secretary of the Commonwealth William F. Galvin is pleased to announce that the Massachusetts Historical Commission approved the Heath Center Historic District (Boundary Increase) in Heath for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places at a recent 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. “Expansion of the National Register boundaries of the Heath Center Historic District will help to protect additional historically significant buildings and sites that evoke the town’s rich agricultural heritage.”

The Heath Center Historic District, listed in the National Register in 2007, is a civic and residential neighborhood in a predominantly rural setting. The purpose of the boundary increase is to add properties located at the north and south borders of the original historic district. At the north border, the boundary will be increased to include the Heath Fairgrounds and the Stephen Barker House at 44 Hosmer Road West. At the south border the boundary will be increased to include the Seth Temple House and the Samuel Hunt House at 55 and 59 South Road, respectively.

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Dating to the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the three houses are local examples of the transitional Georgian/Federal styles of architecture. All three houses stand on lots that were once farmed and that range from roughly 40 to 120 acres. The land is now largely maintained as open fields, and the properties retain the iconic New England stone walls associated with the historic activities of clearing land for farming and grazing. In addition, the properties retain important farmstead outbuildings, including a former icehouse and two barns. The presence of fields, stone walls, and barns, along with the historic farmhouses, are tangible markers of the district's historical significance in the area of agriculture.

The fourteen-acre site of the Heath Fairgrounds was farmland associated with the Stephen Barker House until 1962. At that time, the field was acquired by the trustees of the Heath Agricultural Society, the organization that has run the annual Heath Fair since 1916. The society relocated its fairgrounds to the new site from its former site at 48 South Road, which is in the boundary of the 2007 historic district. The annual Heath Fair has been an important local institution for at least a century, drawing exhibitors and visitors from all over the region. Most of the buildings are clustered at the fairgrounds' northern end, and much of the fourteen acres remains open space.

The Heath Center Historic District (Boundary Increase) is one of five 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 more than 75,000 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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