

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

**Fitchburg Historical Society Receives Massachusetts Cultural Council Planning Grant  
For Continued Development of Phoenix Building Headquarters**

*Massachusetts Cultural Facilities Fund Awards \$24,250 for Historic Fitchburg Building*

(Fitchburg, MA – June 10, 2016) The Fitchburg Historical Society has been awarded a planning grant of \$24,250 from the Massachusetts Cultural Council’s Cultural Facilities Fund for the continued development of its Main Street headquarters, which are located in an historic H.M. Francis building that the Historical Society purchased and renovated over the last decade. Since its grand opening in 2012, the Crocker Family Center for the Study of Fitchburg History has attracted a growing audience to Fitchburg’s downtown for historical exhibitions, educational talks, films and conferences presented by the Fitchburg Historical Society.

The grant funding is a matching grant, and the Fitchburg Historical Society has begun a drive to raise the matching funds from members and other supporters. The funding will be used to create concept plans for the further development of the Phoenix Building for collections storage, program facilities and exhibition spaces.

“Since we opened on Main Street three and a half years ago, we have been able to offer larger programs and marquee exhibitions that are attracting large new audiences to the Historical Society,” says Fitchburg Historical Society President William McSheehy. “We are proud to

serve as one of Main Street's most important institutions, enlivening the Upper Common area and attracting tourists and other visitors to Fitchburg."

"This funding will set the stage for new building projects, in order to update our collections management and move part of our collections out of temporary storage into their permanent home," adds Board Vice-President Jay Bry. "We are continuing the project that began with the acquisition of the Phoenix building itself: specifically the expansion of our audience and membership. We will continue to offer programs and exhibitions that draw a new audience to Fitchburg from all over New England."

The Fitchburg Historical Society will celebrate its 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2017. Home to popular events like the annual Holiday House Tour and popular recent exhibitions like "Healing Hands: the History of Medicine in Fitchburg" and "Felix Leger: A World War II Soldier from Cleghorn," the Historical Society is currently presenting its annual exhibition of historic bicycles, entitled "Iver Johnson: Pioneering Bicycle Design."

"Institutions like the Fitchburg Historical Society are central to the quality of life in our community," according to Fitchburg Mayor Stephen DiNatale. "This investment in an important local cultural resource by the State of Massachusetts and Massachusetts Cultural Council creates tangible results in both economic activity and community vitality."

The Cultural Facilities Fund was created to increase investments from both the public sector and the private sector to support the sound planning and development of cultural facilities in Massachusetts. It provides capital and planning grants to promote the acquisition, design, repair, rehabilitation renovation, expansion, or construction of nonprofit cultural facilities in

Massachusetts. All grants from the Fund must be matched with cash contributions from the private or public sector.

The funding agency is the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency supporting the arts, humanities, and sciences to improve the quality of life in Massachusetts and its communities. The MCC pursues this mission through grants, services, and advocacy for nonprofit cultural organizations, schools, communities, and artists. The planning grant is being administered by MassDevelopment, the state's finance and development agency, which works with businesses, nonprofits, financial institutions, and communities to stimulate economic growth across the Commonwealth. During FY2015, MassDevelopment financed or managed 294 projects generating investment of more than \$2.5 billion in the Massachusetts economy. These projects are projected to create about 6,100 jobs and build or rehabilitate about 2,000 residential units.

For more information on the Fitchburg Historical Society, its exhibitions, educational programs and research library, contact the Fitchburg Historical Society at 978.345.1157, e-mail at [welcome@fitchburghistoricalsociety.com](mailto:welcome@fitchburghistoricalsociety.com) or visit <http://www.fitchburghistoricalsociety.org>.