



News Release

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DOSSIN GREAT LAKES MUSEUM TO BREAK GROUND ON MAJOR OUTDOOR ENHANCEMENT PROJECT

The museum will remain open during Phase 1 of construction, which will run July 1, 2019 through November 2019.

DETROIT- On Monday, July 1, the Detroit Historical Society will break ground on the first part of a **four-phase, \$4.9 million outdoor enhancement project** at the Dossin Great Lakes Museum. A favorite destination for maritime enthusiasts, history buffs and nature lovers, the museum has occupied its riverfront Belle Isle site since 1960 and has more than doubled its attendance over the last five years. While it underwent significant renovations in 2013 as part of the Society's *Past>Forward* campaign, this new project marks the first time that the museum's entire campus will be activated for historical interpretation and recreation.

The first phase of construction, a \$1.5 million landscape focused on enhancing visitor amenities on the site, is projected to last through November 2019 and offers exciting enhancements for museumgoers and island visitors of all types. The museum's **outdoor maritime artifact displays will be upgraded** with improved signage and placement, including the revered anchor from the freighter *Edmund Fitzgerald*, which will be highlighted in a beautiful **Lost Mariners' Memorial** to include a garden, custom lighting and seating areas. The museum will also gain a **riverwalk and observation telescope, a riverfront event patio and an upgraded central lawn area**, providing highly desirable spaces for both public and private events.

In addition, amenities have been designed for active users of the museum's site, including new **pedestrian lighting, bike racks, benches, a cycle service station and a canine refresh station for pets** to coincide with the construction of the Belle Isle section of the Iron Belle Trail, which will pass by the museum entrance. **A new kayak launch** with a soft shoreline will be constructed to stabilize the existing cove adjacent to the museum and serve those interested in non-motorized recreational water activity. For the first time in its nearly 60-year history, the Detroit River will be accessible from the museum for recreational and educational opportunities.

Construction on the Visitor Amenities Phase of the Dossin Outdoor Enhancement Project is led by **L.S. Brinker Company with design oversight by SmithGroup**. Because of the planned extension of roadways and hiking and biking trails, as well as possible alterations to surrounding land areas, the Society is also coordinating closely with the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), the Michigan DNR, the Belle Isle Conservancy and others. This phase of outdoor construction is not expected to impact the museum's regular public hours.

Three additional phases of the Outdoor Enhancement Project, expected to be completed by 2021, are set to include a **riverfront connector trail** similar in design to the Detroit Riverwalk, construction of a **historic landscape** that would approximate the natural setting of Belle Isle before it was developed as a recreational space and complement the nearby Piet Oudolf garden presently under construction and **improved access** to the museum from The Strand and parking lot from Inselruhe Avenue. The Society has raised **\$1.9 million of the \$4.9 million** total budget and is currently seeking gifts to ensure the seamless completion of the project.

The **Dossin Great Lakes Museum** is located at 100 Strand Drive on Belle Isle. Admission is free for all, all the time. Permanent exhibits include *Built by the River* in the John A. and Marlene L. Boll Foundation Gallery, the *Miss Pepsi* vintage 1950s championship hydroplane, the Gothic Room from the *City of Detroit III* in the Polk Family Hall, a bow anchor from the *S.S. Edmund Fitzgerald*, the pilothouse from the Great Lakes freighter *S.S. William Clay Ford* in the Wayne and Joan Webber Foundation Gallery, and one of the largest known collections of scale model ships in the world. For more information, call the Museum at 313.833.5538 or check out our website at detroithistorical.org.

The **Detroit Historical Society** is a private, nonprofit organization located in Midtown, the heart of Detroit's cultural center. Founded in 1921, its mission is to tell Detroit's stories and why they matter. Today, the Society operates the Detroit Historical Museum and the Dossin Great Lakes Museum. In addition, the Society is responsible for the conservation and preservation of more than 250,000 artifacts that represent three centuries of our region's rich history. Through its museum exhibits, school tour programs, community-based programs and history-themed outreach efforts, the Society serves more than 150,000 people annually. For more information on the Detroit Historical Society, visit detroithistorical.org.

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