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MORE THAN 20 TEENS HIRED FOR SUMMER EMPLOYMENT AT NATIONAL PARK IN SALEM THROUGH *F1rstJobs* PROGRAM

Summer jobs provide youth much-needed employment while making connections to area historic, cultural and natural resources

(SALEM, MA August __, 2010) – The Essex National Heritage Commission (Essex Heritage) and the National Park Service are collaborating with the North Shore Workforce Investment Board’s (NSWIB) *F1rstJobs* program to provide paid summer jobs to teens at national park units in Salem and Saugus. The summer jobs provide much needed employment to North Shore teens while facilitating opportunities to connect underserved youth to the rich cultural, historic and natural resources within Essex County.

Sixteen work positions through *F1rstJobs* will be made available to North Shore youth at the Salem Maritime and Saugus Iron Works Historic Sites this summer. "Providing high quality work experience is our priority. The positions provide opportunities for youth to learn job, leadership and life skills under the direction and supervision of our highly skilled staff," stated Patricia S. Trap, superintendent of both national park units. This program was piloted last summer with 10 teens who had a wide range of experiences, from learning how to gold leaf the Customs House sign to greeting visitors at the National Park Service’s Regional Visitor Center in Salem.

Essex Heritage is providing the interface between the National Park Service and the *F1rstJobs* program by hiring the teens on behalf of the National Park Service. "These summer jobs provide hands-on work experiences for city kids at a time when employment opportunities for this age group are very scarce," says Essex National Heritage Commission Executive Director Annie Harris. "We are very pleased that our special partnership relationship with the National Park Service enables us to make this happen." Essex Heritage has more than a decade of experience building collaborative public-private partnerships to support quality of life programs in Essex County. Harris adds that, "We are also very grateful to the Eastern Bank Charitable Fund which is providing an additional grant to cover a gap in the public funding."

The F1rstJobs program is funded in part through the U.S. Department of Labor's American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and the Massachusetts Youth Works Grant. "This collaboration between Essex Heritage, the National Park Service, and the North Shore Workforce Investment Board is a boon to our community, our economy, and the local teens looking to gain work experience," Congressman John Tierney said. "I look forward to sitting down with the young men and women participating in the F1rstJobs program later this month, and hearing their personal stories. This program is making a real difference in setting our young people on the right path to long-term success."

"We are impressed with the quality of the work and learning experiences offered to youth through Essex Heritage and the National Park Service," adds Mary Sarris, executive director of North Shore Workforce Investment Board. "It is uncommon for youth to get jobs with the federal government and this is a unique partnership between the Department of Labor and the Department of the Interior. It has been made possible through the efforts of local organizations identifying a need and reaching out to creatively address the important issue of jobs fulfillment."

The National Park Service has made youth engagement and employment an important national priority. Through the National Park Service's student employment program, two high school students from last summer, who held jobs through the Essex Heritage, National Park Service and F1rstJobs partnership, are returning as leaders and mentors for 16 newly hired teens. Three college age student employees also will work at the park in support of the program this summer.

"It is a 'real eye-opener' for these teens who are between the ages of 14 and 17 when they see what it takes to deal with the visiting public, to work on historic properties, and to have a job in the 'real world.' The pilot program last summer was a wonderful experience for all of us, and I am very pleased that we can expand it this year," says Douglas Law, who has been assigned as the Youth Program Coordinator for Salem Maritime and Saugus Iron Works.

To prepare students for their projects, NPS will provide training sessions in a wide range of skills, from workplace expectations to historic restoration and preservation skills including arborist training with the Olmstead Center for Landscape Preservation. Among the projects the F1rstJobs youth will conduct are restoring an 18th century style garden according to the original garden plan; adding gold leaf to signs for the Orientation Center; painting the historic Narbonne House; doing maintenance on the park's tall ship *Friendship of Salem*; scanning archival photographs; conducting visitor surveys; and more.

"This exciting and innovative job program helps connect young Americans with their National Parks and National Heritage Areas. More importantly, the program extends the National Park Service ethic—our shared responsibility to become stewards of our natural environment and our communities' heritage resources—beyond park boundaries," adds Superintendent Patricia S. Trap.

Revised Draft 8/5/10

For additional information, please visit essexheritage.org and [nps.gov.sama](http://nps.gov/sama).

About the Essex National Heritage Area and Essex Heritage

Designated by the US Congress in recognition of the important role that this region played in American history and its significant sites still remaining, the Essex National Heritage Area is comprised of the 34 communities in Essex County, MA. Essex Heritage is a non-profit agency that manages the Heritage Area, and works in collaboration with the National Park Service to promote public-private partnerships, and develop programs that enhance, preserve and encourage regional awareness of the Area's unique historic, cultural and natural resources. For more information, visit Essex Heritage at www.essexheritage.org or call (978) 740-0444.

About Salem Maritime National Historic Site

Salem Maritime National Historic Site was designated in 1937, the first National Historic Site in the National Park Service system. The nine acre site includes the homes of merchants and mariners, the Salem Custom House in which the famous author Nathaniel Hawthorne worked, and a replica of the three-masted cargo vessel *Friendship*. Today, the rangers and volunteers of Salem Maritime NHS continue to inform and inspire visitors with the maritime history of New England and the United States. For more information, visit www.nps.gov/sama or call (978) 740-1650.

About Saugus Iron Works National Historic Site

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