



ESSEX NATIONAL  
HERITAGE AREA

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Media Contact:** Mary Williamson  
Director of Development &  
Communications  
978/740-0444, Ext.16  
maryw@essexheritage.org

Annie Harris  
Executive Director  
978/740-0444  
acharris@essexheritage.org

**THREE LOCAL LEADERS**

**HONORED WITH 2010 ESSEX HERITAGE HERO AWARD**

*Nick Costello, Maria Miles and Byron Matthews to receive  
distinctive recognition on May 20<sup>th</sup>.*

**May 4, 2010 (Salem, MA) . . . Leadership, Determination and Loyalty...just a few qualities that define a Hero and characterize our Honorees.** On May 20<sup>th</sup>, The Essex National Heritage Commission, will once again celebrate our region's unique cultural heritage, when in partnership with the National Park Service, they present the Essex Heritage Hero Awards, an evening celebrating the lifelong civic engagement and accomplishments of three distinguished regional heroes:

Nicholas Costello, Amesbury

Maria Miles, Salisbury

Byron Matthews, Newburyport

“Their individual and collective dedication to their beloved communities led to actions that brought crucial leadership and resources, inspiring renewed pride of place in Amesbury, Salisbury and Newburyport” said Annie C. Harris, Essex Heritage Executive Director. “In addition, each of the honorees had a distinctive relationship with the Heritage Commission in its formative years, when their grassroots leadership and encouragement garnered local

support for the congressionally-designated, yet fledgling regional organization” she added. The Essex Heritage Hero Award acknowledges these special contributions, recognizes that their work has helped advance the Essex Heritage mission– to preserve and promote the region’s rich historic, cultural and natural resources – and that they continue to serve as a source of inspiration to a new generation of resource stewards.

“Each honoree, in their own way, has been a steadfast supporter of the Essex Heritage mission in their professional and volunteer capacities, and all have worked on behalf of their local communities and affinity organizations to promote pride of place, heritage preservation and community pride, extending the ethic of the National Park Service,” added Patricia Trap, Superintendent of the Salem Maritime and Saugus Iron Works National Historic Sites, who will represent the National Park Service at the award ceremony.

Nick Costello’s public service as Selectmen, State Representative, State Senator and first Mayor of Amesbury after Charter revision, brought years of leadership and advocacy to the town on the threshold of revitalization. His particular efforts led to the smart-growth development of several mill buildings and other parcels, a façade beautification program and the addition of streetscape amenities which led to a downtown revival. In addition, Nick worked for the creation of Maudslay State Park and Maudslay Art Center, and has worked tirelessly on behalf of cultural and social service organizations in the region.

Maria Miles, in her capacities as long-time President of the Salisbury Chamber of Commerce and Director within the North of Boston Convention and Visitors Bureau has demonstrated her commitment to heritage tourism and development in Salisbury and beyond. Maria saw the collective benefit of regional organizations that helped to support promotional efforts at the grassroots level. Her proudest accomplishment, the creation of a regional visitor center on the I-95 stretch of Salisbury, became the gateway and welcome station to millions of tourists annually.

Byron Matthews, Newburyport’s former Mayor and servant to numerous governors, brought critical leadership, innovative thinking and creative partnerships to bear when Newburyport

faced the bulldozers of urban renewal in the 1970s. He was part of a movement that used the pioneering tool of historic preservation to rescue Newburyport from urban blight and decline, creating its rebirth into a renowned New England destination. Byron has been a tireless advocate on behalf of Newburyport's revitalization, and even today, is inspiring a new generation of City leaders who are working to preserve the amenities provided to the City under his early leadership.

Collectively, the honorees have dedicated over 150 years of service to their beloved communities. They each have been involved on countless non-profit Boards, from all volunteer local historical societies to large efforts on behalf of Anna Jaques Hospital and Northern Essex Community College. "Their commitment, regardless of the cause, has always been authentic and reliable. They are people of action – real change-agents – who obtained tangible results for their communities through hard-work and determination," commented Ms. Harris.

Essex Heritage and the National Park Service are proud to bestow the 2010 Essex Heritage Hero Awards to these regional leaders on May 20<sup>th</sup> at the Blue Ocean Music Hall in Salisbury. Friends, family and associates will toast the honorees many civic accomplishments and celebrate their significant contributions to the quality of life in this region. Interested citizens and members of the public are invited to attend the annual ticketed event, which pays tribute to the people and organizations who's passions further advance the mission, while also raising funds for Essex Heritage programs that are reinvested back into the 34 city and towns of Essex County.

This event will connect leaders from business, civic and non-profit organizations across the North Shore. Together with Essex Heritage and National Park Service leaders, event Master of Ceremonies Charlie Cullen, President of the Provident Bank and long-time acquaintance to all of the honorees, will provide an entertaining retrospective of their decades of service, recounting the many friends, citizens and organizations the honorees have helped along the way. "I consider it an honor and privilege to play a role in this celebration. As a long-time Essex Heritage Commissioner, and recent Trustee, I have witnessed the profound difference

that individuals can make through service to their communities. Having known and worked with all three honorees over the years, I can attest to their sense of purpose and resourceful leadership, said Mr. Cullen. “This distinctive honor is well-deserved, I hope the entire community will come out to support it,” he added.

**About the Essex National Heritage Area:** Designated by Congress in 1996, the Essex National Heritage Area was created in recognition of the important role that this region holds in American history, and the significant heritage sites that exist here. Spanning 500 square miles north of Boston, the Essex National Heritage Area focuses on three essential American themes: early settlement, maritime history and the early industrial era.

The Essex National Heritage Commission was formed as a non-profit steward for the area, working in collaboration with the National Park Service to promote public and private partnerships and coalitions, and develop programs that enhance, preserve and encourage regional awareness and recreational enjoyment of the area’s unique landscape. For the last 11 years, the Essex Heritage Partnership Grant Program has provided more than \$1.6 million to municipalities and non-profit heritage organizations to support their stewardship efforts in the areas of heritage education, interpretative programming, historic preservation, community trails, and historical records, and has leveraged an additional \$15.5 million in matching investment from other public and private sources.

For additional information about the 2010 Essex Heritage Hero event or Essex heritage programs, please visit: [EssexHeritage.org](http://EssexHeritage.org)



### **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 heritage sites still remaining, the Essex National Heritage Area is comprised of the 34 communities of 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](http://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 us on the web at [www.nps.gov/sama](http://www.nps.gov/sama) or call 978-740-1650.



### **About Saugus Iron Works National Historic Site**

From 1646 to about 1670, the Saugus Iron Works supplied crucial iron products to the new Massachusetts Bay Colony. Today, Saugus Iron Works National Historic Site preserves and interprets eight acres of original and reconstructed buildings, archeological sites, and waterfront along the Saugus River that encompasses the site of the first successful iron works in America. For more information, please call 781-233-0050 or visit on the web at [www.nps.gov/sair](http://www.nps.gov/sair).