

Office of Representative James E. Vallee
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CONTACT:

Erin Souza

(617) 722- 2380

**REPRESENTATIVE VALLEE AND FRANKLIN DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP
ANNOUNCE \$50K GRANTED FOR REVITALIZATION PROJECTS**

State funding to be used for downtown improvements for second consecutive year

(FRANKLIN) – Downtown upgrades will continue in Franklin, thanks to a \$50,000 appropriation announced today by Representative James E. Vallee (*D – Franklin*), Assistant Vice-Chairman of the House Committee on Ways and Means. Vallee today joined Lisa Piana, Franklin’s Downtown Manager and Executive Director of the Downtown Partnership, to announce an earmark in the Fiscal Year 2008 budget for improvement projects in historic downtown Franklin.

For the second consecutive year, Vallee secured \$50,000 in the state budget to promote tourism and cultural events in and around Franklin’s revamped and renewed downtown, an area where residents and visitors can enjoy a wealth of restaurants, shops and cultural stops.

“The downtown area is the epicenter of Franklin,” Vallee said. “Investment in this area is critical for restoring and maintaining all that Franklin has to offer residents and tourists.”

“We are thrilled that we will be able to continue with our revitalization efforts with the additional \$50,000,” Piana said.

Plans for this year’s projects include an interactive website and public art exhibits. “Our plan is to create a new downtown website that will include a map of downtown and incorporate all Partnership, cultural and tourism events in the downtown,” Piana said.

Last year’s grants funded four projects, among them an original bronze sculpture designed exclusively for Franklin by award-winning artist Marcia Billig. The unique sculpture will sit in front of the new Franklin Historical Museum, a site that currently houses the Franklin Senior Center.

Franklin now has two signs to advertise downtown events as well, purchased with the FY07 grants.

Last year's funding not only made downtown Franklin more charming, but also made it more green. "The projects funded by this grant have made a significant impact on our downtown," Piana said, noting the 12 eco-friendly trash and recycling receptacles purchased last year.

The period lampposts along downtown streets will boast holiday wreaths and garlands as well, also made possible by the funding.

"It will be so exciting this coming year when the new sculpture arrives and the additional projects are completed," Piana said.

"This funding will assist the Partnership in continuing its efforts to restore downtown Franklin as the heart of the town's civic and cultural activities," Vallee said. "As a lifelong resident of Franklin and a representative of the town's citizens, I am thrilled to have been a part of the effort."

The mission of the Franklin Downtown Partnership is to lessen the burden on local government through public improvement activities, combat community deterioration, preserve the historic character of the downtown commercial area, and educate the public about the architecture and historical aspects of downtown Franklin.

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