



PRESS RELEASE

The Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum

4079 Albany Post Road, Hyde Park, NY 12538-1917

www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu 1-800-FDR-VISIT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For Information Contact: Cliff Laube (845) 486-7745

“Action, and Action Now” FDR’s First 100 Days

A Special Exhibition Commemorating the
Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the New Deal

***“Action, and Action Now” FDR’s First 100 Days* opens March 4, 2008 at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum in Hyde Park, New York. This major special exhibition marks the seventy-fifth anniversary of Franklin Roosevelt’s first inauguration and the beginning of the New Deal. It is an immersive experience, designed to evoke the desperation of the people in the midst of the Great Depression, followed by hope and energy as the nation rebuilds. The exhibit uses dramatic and historic audio-visuals, as well as rarely-seen documents, photographs, artifacts, and posters drawn from the archives of the Roosevelt Library and Museum.**

On Saturday March 4, 1933 Franklin D. Roosevelt was inaugurated President of the United States. The majority of Americans had every reason to be afraid. Nearly 13 million people—one in four—was jobless. Nineteen million people depended upon meager relief payments to survive. Workers lucky enough to have jobs earned, on average, only two-thirds what they made at the start of the Depression in 1929. Many of those who had money lost it: four thousand banks collapsed in the first two months of 1933.

President Roosevelt took command of a country that was incapacitated by fear. Perhaps only a man who had experienced polio and struggled to restore his own hope for the future could empathize with the national condition. Infusing people with his conviction that they had “nothing to fear but fear itself,” the First 100 Days became a turning point for a nearly beaten population.

So great was the emergency, some urged dictatorial powers, but FDR rejected the suspension of constitutional government. Instead he embarked on plan of “Action, and Action Now” to meet this vast crisis. The speed and scope of Roosevelt’s actions were unprecedented. Many later presidents have used the “First 100 Days” as a measure against which to mobilize their own administrations. But none has succeeded in achieving FDR’s legislative agenda. In less than four months the economy was stabilized, homes and farms were saved from foreclosure, and massive relief and work programs addressed the dire needs of the people. Most important, the First 100 Days restored hope and, in the process, preserved democratic government in the United States.

The exhibit opens March 4, 2008, seventy-five years to day after FDR’s first inauguration in the William J. vanden Heuvel Gallery at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum in Hyde Park, New York. It is funded by the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute.

For additional information please call Cliff Laube at (845) 486-7745 or visit the Roosevelt Library website at www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu.

The Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum is dedicated to preserving historical material and providing innovative educational programs, community events, and public outreach. It is one of twelve presidential libraries administered by the National Archives and Records Administration. For information about the FDR Presidential Library call (800) 337-8474 or visit www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu.

Historic Hyde Park is a group of government and private non-profit organizations based in Hyde Park, New York. Each has a unique mission, but all are united in their dedication to extending the legacy of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt to new generations. HHP includes the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, the Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site, Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site, the Eleanor Roosevelt Center at Val-Kill, the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute, and Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site. For more information about HHP visit www.HistoricHydePark.org.