



# PRESS RELEASE

## The Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum

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### **2009 Federal Budget Includes \$17.5 million to Begin Franklin D. Roosevelt Library and Museum Renovation**

#### **A Statement from Cynthia Koch**

Director, Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum  
Hyde Park, New York

Today we learned that the federal budget for 2009 includes \$17.5 million in funding to begin the renovation of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library and Museum. Sen. Charles Schumer, Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (as Congresswoman), Congressman Maurice Hinchey, Congressman Jose Serrano, Sen. Harry Reid and former Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton were instrumental in securing this support.

With this funding we can at long last begin to address the serious problems facing this landmark building. Because the Library looks so durable—like a sturdy Dutch farmhouse—it has been hard for people to understand that its deteriorated condition endangers the continued preservation of the world's only archive of the Roosevelt presidency.

Planning for this project dates back to 2003 when serious building deficiencies were first identified by the National Archives and Records Administration, the Library's parent agency. This funding will enable us to begin the first phase of work that will correct problems with groundwater and leaking roofs, update outmoded electrical, security, and

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HVAC systems, and make the building fully handicapped accessible. With additional funding required in 2010 and 2011, the project is expected to be completed in 2013. The project is being designed by the architectural firm of Einhorn, Jaffe, Prescott of Albany, New York under contract to the National Archives. All plans are being developed to respect and enhance the Roosevelt Library's historic character. The Research Room and the Museum will remain operational throughout, although they will be temporarily relocated to the Wallace Center and the newly renovated William J. vanden Heuvel Gallery.

For the first time the Roosevelt Library will meet the National Archives environmental standards for the long-term preservation of the irreplaceable collections housed in this building. Archival holdings include over 17 million pages of documents and audio-visual materials, including all the papers of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt. Among them are the iconic documents of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: the first draft of the "Day of Infamy Speech"; FDR's 1935 statement upon signing the Social Security Act; the 1939 Albert Einstein letter that led to the creation of the Manhattan Project; Roosevelt's 1941 "Four Freedoms" speech; the D-Day Prayer of June 6, 1944; and hundreds of thousands of letters from average citizens who wrote to the President and Mrs. Roosevelt.

The Museum holds 35,000 invaluable artifacts including FDR's Oval Office desk, his hand-operated automobile, and personal items like his famous naval cloak, his wheelchair, and his metal leg braces. There are also priceless head of state gifts (including a gem-encrusted tiara given to Mrs. Roosevelt by the Sultan of Morocco), New Deal art, political memorabilia, and personal collections amassed by FDR (such as his collection of nearly 2000 naval prints, paintings, drawings, and ship models). The Roosevelt Library even holds a significant collection of books: FDR's own personal library of 22,000 volumes plus 30,000 volumes on the Roosevelt era added to the collection over the past 70 years.

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Security will be improved in the archives stacks and the space reorganized to accommodate a modest growth in collections. When the renovation is complete, new permanent exhibits in the Museum will employ the latest technologies to enthrall visitors with the gripping story of the leadership of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt.

The Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute raised \$5.5 million in private funds to create and install the new permanent exhibits. The exhibits are being designed by Gallagher and Associates of Bethesda, Maryland. Together the improved archival conditions and the new Museum will add incomparably to the Library's value for researchers, students, teachers and the general public.

The renovation of the Roosevelt Library will be an economic boon to New York's Hudson Valley. In the first phase alone, between fifty and seventy-five construction jobs will be created. When the renovation is complete, a new Roosevelt Museum will open with engaging exhibitions using interactive technology to draw increased visitorship to Hyde Park and Dutchess County. At present, the Roosevelt Library and Home of FDR account for more than \$6.4 million in annual tourist spending according to Dutchess County Tourism estimates.

The Roosevelt Library, which is one of 13 Presidential libraries operated by the National Archives and Records Administration, was identified by the National Archives as its top priority capital improvement project in its submission of the 2009 federal budget. The Library is grateful to the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute not only for funding the new exhibitions, but also for leadership with Congress. Founder and Chairman Emeritus William vanden Heuvel, Co-Chairs Richard French and Anne Roosevelt, and Board members Phillip Johnston, Allida Black, and Donald Fowler have all taken leadership roles in securing public and private support for the renovation of the Library and its new exhibitions.

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