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Restoration of Belmont Mill effort chronicled on new state historical marker

BELMONT — The 1833 Belmont Mill and saga of its 1990s preservation and reuse has been honored with a New Hampshire Historical Highway Marker, through a 60 year-old statewide program managed jointly by the N.H. Division of Historical Resources and N.H. Department of Transportation.

The marker is #235 and cites the "Saving the Belmont Mill" at a Rte. 140 West/Depot Street location just before Main Street in the community's National Register of Historic Places eligible Factory Village District. The cast iron sign features the state seal and descriptive text, and was presented to the Board of Selectmen on Monday by the Belmont Heritage Commission, who successfully petitioned and applied for the marker.

Last year marked the 20th anniversary of the devastating August 14, 1992 fire which most thought was the end for the mill. Belmont Historical Society president Wallace Rhodes, who led the effort to save the mill — and acquire the marker said "Gratitude is due Belmont residents for preserving this strong emblem of pride in community heritage for those that follow."

Since its 1998 re-dedication, the Belmont Mill has been honored with over a dozen regional and statewide



Belmont Selectboard Chairman Ron Cormier, with colleagues Ruth Mooney and Jon Pike at the unveiling of New Hampshire's newest historical highway marker on July 15 with Heritage Commission members Wallace Rhodes and Alyce Jewell. The sign honoring the saving of the Belmont Mill is located on Rte. 140 West/Depot Street, with the much-awarded 1833 building bell tower just visible on the other side of the Tioga River. (Vicki Donovan photo)

awards. The New Hampshire Preservation Alliance cited it as one of New Hampshire's most significant and challenging preservation projects of the last quarter century. And the mill

was most recently distinguished with an award from the Victorian Society

in America, New England Chapter two years ago.

At the unveiling, Belmont Heritage Commission chairman Linda Frawley recognized the efforts of current selectmen, and longstanding help from the N.H. Division of Historical Resources and Department of Transportation in protecting Village sites including the Mill, Bandstand and Library as "special treasures that still define Belmont."

Selectboard Chairman Ronald Cormier, in formally accepting the new sign, pointed out that the board valued the mill as the community's "most visible icon of its past" and had recently commissioned an updated town logo featuring its 1833 cupola. Cormier also serves as selectmen's representative to the Heritage Commission, and was joined at the unveiling by Selectmen Jon Pike and Ruth Mooney.

Over the next months, the new marker will be added to a statewide map highlighting all historical markers and shown by town and GPS coordinates. For more information about the program visit www.nh.gov

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