



Staten Island Museum's 'Mastodon' project gets a hefty fiscal boost

Published: Friday, July 27, 2012, 7:38 AM Updated: Friday, July 27, 2012, 7:53 AM



Michael J. Fressola

By

STATEN ISLAND, N.Y. — Funds to build “Tales of the Mastodon,” a permanent exhibit planned for the new home of the **Staten Island Museum**, are trickling in. The museum figures it’s a little better than halfway to a goal of \$400,000, thanks to a \$150,000 grant from the federal Institute for Museum and Library Services.

The installation, dominated by a 10-foot tall replica of mastodon, has already attracted a \$66,000 appropriation from the Office of the Borough President.

The as yet unnamed mastodon will be the first, and largest thing that visitors will see as they enter the

museum’s new home on the “temple row” of the Snug Harbor Cultural Center & Botanical Garden. A \$25 million, conservation-minded green retrofitting got under way last year inside Building A at the Harbor.

The long-vacant, landmarked 1879-vintage brick and limestone structure was a dormitory when it was part of Sailors Snug Harbor, a self-sufficient retirement complex for indigent seafarers.

The new museum will open to the public early in 2014.

Among the other inaugural exhibits, “Island Seen,” will be an ambitious, two-part undertaking: A survey of 19th- and 20th-century depictions of the Island, coupled with new views developed by 10 contemporary artists.

The Henry Luce Foundation contributed \$25,000 to “Island Seen,” a sum that is being matched by the Staten Island Foundation.

Mastodons were plant-eating, elephant-like mammals, sometimes with nine-foot tusks. They were common across North America, Africa and Europe until about 10,000 B.C., when they became extinct.

In its collections, the Museum has mastodon bones found near the intersection of New Dorp Lane and Richmond Road. In addition to the mastodon, “Tales of the Mastodon” will offer information about biodiversity and climate



View full size

The Staten Island Museum building at the Snug Harbor Cultural Center and Botanical Garden in Livingston. (Staten Island Advance)

change.

The award was one of the larger grants in the state. Among the other recipients were the New York Botanical Garden, American Museum of the Moving Image, New York Historical Society and the Museum of the City of New York.

© 2012 SILive.com. All rights reserved.