



Monday, March 15, 2021
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University of Maine presents 3D printed Dirigo Star to the Maine Bicentennial Commission for bicentennial time capsule

ORONO – The University of Maine’s Advanced Structures & Composites Center today presented a 3D printed “Dirigo” Star to the Maine Bicentennial Commission, to be the core component of the Maine Bicentennial Time Capsule.

During a ceremony at the UMaine Composites Center, President Joan Ferrini-Mundy presented the Dirigo star to Senator Bill Diamond, chairman of the Maine Bicentennial Commission.

“The North Star that this capsule is modeled after has been a constant guide to the people who lived on this land before and since statehood. It’s meant to symbolize our state’s leadership, but today, it also shines a light on the talent and innovation that has been produced by our flagship university since 1865 and increasingly is elevating Maine in our nation and around the globe,” said President Ferrini-Mundy, who is also the University of Maine System Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation. “We are honored to present this gift made by our faculty, staff and students to the people of Maine, and proud that it will be on public display in Augusta for the coming century as a reminder of what the people of this great state are capable of creating together and the central role of innovation in our past, present and future.”

The Dirigo Star and banner, elements of the Maine State Seal, are the unifying symbols for the Maine bicentennial, chosen as the core component of the time capsule design. Governor Janet T. Mills offers her reflections on the symbol’s significance, to her personally and to the State of Maine:

“It was my grandfather, a potato farmer from Ashland, who taught me as a young girl to turn my eyes to the stars in the night sky. Still today, it is not a book or a map that I rely on to find those constellations or to find my way through life. It is the experience, resilience and, most importantly, the perseverance of an Aroostook County farmer,” said Governor Mills. “The Dirigo Star is a beautiful tribute to the ways we have been tested as a state and as a nation and a timeless reminder that the perseverance of Maine people will guide us through the challenges of our times, as true as the North Star.”

The staff and students of the UMaine Composites Center created the star in coordination with representatives of the Maine Bicentennial Commission, over the course of several months.

“3D printed using aerospace-grade composites, the Dirigo star created by our outstanding staff and students honors our past while ushering in our technological future,” said Dr. Habib Dagher, Executive Director, Advanced Structures and Composites Center. “We thank the Maine Bicentennial Commission and state leadership for joining us on Maine’s Statehood Day and for the opportunity to present the time capsule in front of 3Dirigo, the world’s largest 3D printed vessel.”

The beveled gold star is three-dimensional, with a width of 3 feet. It will be mounted atop a custom-made tapered cabinet created by Maine Heritage Timber, with a metal Dirigo banner mounted in front. The cabinet’s taper is intended to evoke imagery of Maine’s iconic lighthouses and its housing will be crafted from Maine wood reclaimed from the Penobscot River. A two-inch thick polished Maine granite slab will be placed on the top of the cabinet.

“We are thrilled to have this beautiful contribution from the University that incorporates new technology to help us celebrate how far we’ve come as a State in the past 201 years,” said Sen. Diamond. “While many of our events for the bicentennial commemoration have been postponed, unveiling the star today and kicking off our time capsule program is a way for us to remind the public that we remain active and we fully intend to properly mark this moment in history, not only for ourselves but for the generations of Mainers to come.”

The time capsule’s cabinet will have four storage drawers, allowing for items to be added during the State’s milestone anniversaries in 2045, 2070, and 2095. A grand unsealing is envisioned in 2120.

To ensure that the additional drawers are filled and the 2020 capsule is unsealed in 100 years, the Commission is inviting all Mainers who share the State of Maine’s March 15 birthday to [sign up to become “time capsule keepers”](#) who will be stewards of the capsule for the next 100 years.

Once completed later this year, the Bicentennial Time Capsule will be housed at the Maine State Library in Augusta. A public sealing ceremony is slated for late fall 2021.

The Bicentennial Commission will choose small items to seal within a cylinder that will be placed inside the star. Additional items commemorating 2020 will be chosen for inclusion in one of the cabinet drawers as well. The Commission is seeking public input on items for inclusion in the capsule and invites suggestions via email at info@maine200.org.

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This event was livestreamed and the recordings are available to view on the [University of Maine YouTube Page](#) and [Maine200 Facebook page](#).