

## Chamber gets \$10K to move historic statue

Madonna of the Trailis moving to downtown connector park.

By Andrea Chaffin, Staff Writer

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SPRINGFIELD — The Clark County Convention Facilities Authority has awarded the Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce \$10,000 toward the move of the Madonna of the Trail statue from its present location near Snyder Park Golf Course to the new downtown connector park, National Road Commons.

The 17-ton statue, an aggregate sculpture of a woman holding two children and a rifle, honors pioneer women who traveled West along the road.

City officials have been championing the statue's move to the downtown park, which is set to open by Aug. 27, said Mike McDorman, the chamber's president.

"The new location of the Madonna will help us better utilize the common thread that helps make Springfield a thriving community on the National Road and will further help stimulate heritage tourism in downtown Springfield," McDorman said.

The statue is one of 12 nationwide that were erected along National Road by state chapters of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Springfield's Madonna was the first erected and dedicated on July 4, 1928, on the grounds of the Ohio Masonic Community, exactly where the cloverleaf was built.

The sculpture was moved in 1956 to its current location at Snyder Park to make way for a highway expansion.

DAR member Mildred Thomas said she is overwhelmed that the CFA has awarded funds. The statue's current location is not only difficult for visitors to see as they travel past, but it's a safety issue for those who stop.

"There's no parking lot, so you have to pull off on the side of the road," Thomas said. "And that's scary."

Although DAR considers itself Madonna's guardian, the Chamber is assuming all responsibility for her move, Thomas said.

"We're just there looking over their shoulder to make sure it's done right," she said. "We have a great attachment to her."

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