



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, March 19, 2025

Media contact: dnr.pio@illinois.gov

IDNR and CDB announce \$8 million for improvements to Lincoln's New Salem State Historic Site

SPRINGFIELD – Today, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and the Illinois Capital Development Board (CDB) announced \$8 million for improvements to [Lincoln's New Salem State Historic Site](#) in Menard County, the popular recreated log village where young Abraham Lincoln lived for six formative years from 1831 to 1837. The funding, made possible by Governor JB Pritzker's bipartisan Rebuild Illinois capital plan, will be used to repair up to 23 log village buildings and update the outdoor theater.

"We are grateful for Governor Pritzker's ongoing commitment to preserving New Salem and other state historic sites for future generations," **said IDNR Director Natalie Phelps Finnie.** "For decades, Illinois families have enjoyed visiting New Salem for class trips, historical demonstrations, scouting excursions, theater outings, candlelight walks, summer picnics, and more. We want to ensure visitors can continue enjoying all that New Salem has to offer for years to come."

This funding is in addition to the nearly \$3 million in improvements that have already been completed or undertaken at New Salem under the Pritzker administration, including a roof replacement and new HVAC controls at the visitor center, stairway construction between the village and the grist mill, a bridge replacement on the Mentor Graham Trail, a planned major road and bridge improvement project, and more.

Lincoln's New Salem, one of 56 state historic sites managed by IDNR, attracted 374,418 visitors in 2024 and 359,950 visitors in 2023. The site's [annual candlelight walk](#) in October is one of the region's most popular kick-offs to the fall season each year.

Built in the 1930s and 1940s as a Civilian Conservation Corps program, New Salem village features 23 historically furnished buildings, including several homes, stores, and tradesmen's shops, as well as a tavern, school, wool carding mill, a sawmill and gristmill. Scattered throughout the village are log barns and other outbuildings. At the entrance to the historical village is a visitor center that houses museum exhibits and a 250-seat auditorium. Adjacent to the visitor center is a 500-seat outdoor theater. In addition, New Salem village is part of a 700-acre park with hiking trails, a campground, picnic areas, and playground equipment.

###