



# News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **GM Foundation Celebrates Spirit of Innovation through Benjamin Franklin Exhibit at the National Archives Experience**

### ***Foundation for the National Archives Receives \$100,000 GM Foundation Grant***

**Washington, DC** – The General Motors Foundation has donated \$100,000 to the Foundation for the National Archives in support of the National Archives Experience's upcoming exhibition exploring the life and accomplishments of Benjamin Franklin.

The grant will be used to provide support and educational outreach for "Benjamin Franklin: In Search of a Better World," which opens at the Lawrence F. O'Brien Gallery of the National Archives Building in Washington, DC, on February 10, 2012, and runs through May 6, 2012.

"Benjamin Franklin's legacy of innovation, scientific studies, and entrepreneurship embodies the very spirit that has driven the automotive industry for more than a hundred years," said Bob Ferguson, chairman, GM Foundation. "The exhibit is sure to inspire our next generation of leaders and inventors destined to develop technologies that will advance our nation's global competitiveness."

Organized by The Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary and redesigned for a national tour by the Minnesota Historical Society, the exhibition explores how Franklin helped found a new nation and cultivated the character of its society, leaving a legacy of scientific, civic, and political achievement. The exhibit examines Franklin's background, his self-education, his philosophical and religious beliefs, and their influence in his life.

"We are so pleased to have the General Motors Foundation partner with us on this exhibition celebrating Benjamin Franklin and American innovation," said Thora Colot, executive director of the Foundation. "Our new focus on STEM education and programming through the use of primary sources from the National Archives works perfectly with the GM Foundation's emphasis on promoting science, technology, engineering, and math education."

The National Archives will encourage visitors to take a new look at this Founding Father by showcasing some of its own original Franklin records:

- The Ledger of the General Post Office of the United States, from August 1775 to October 1776
- The Treaty of Paris of 1783, ending the American Revolution
- A printed version of the U.S. Constitution from September 17, 1787
- The Continental Congress Journal of June 11, 1776, appointing Franklin, along with Thomas Jefferson and John Adams, to prepare a “declaration of independency”
- A January 4, 1777 letter from Franklin to the Continental Congress’s Secret Correspondence Committee on his diplomatic efforts at the French court
- The July 5, 1787 Journal of the Constitutional Convention, detailing the compromise by Franklin and others concerning Congressional representation, often referred to as “the Great Compromise”

“We are thrilled that the General Motors Foundation will serve as lead supporter for this exciting exhibition,” said Foundation Chair and President A’Lelia Bundles. “This generous donation will help us fund expenses associated with hosting and promoting the exhibition featuring one of the most influential Americans in history.”

The automotive industry has historically served as a technology innovator spurring scientific advancements that have touched our everyday lives and bolstered our nation’s manufacturing strength and leadership. GM’s first patent was awarded 90 years ago and today the number of GM patents exceeds 30,000.

Accompanying the exhibition will be a series of free public programs at the National Archives’ William G. McGowan Theater. The Archives Store at the National Archives Building will also feature Benjamin Franklin-related products and books during the exhibition.

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### **About the Foundation for the National Archives**

The Foundation for the National Archives is an independent nonprofit that serves as the National Archives’ private-sector partner in the creation of and ongoing support of the National Archives Experience, which includes permanent exhibits, educational programs, traveling exhibits, special events and film screenings, and historical/records-related products, publications, and media. The Foundation helps the public understand the importance of the holdings of the National Archives by presenting the depth and diversity of the records through award-

winning, interactive educational exhibits and programs. It generates financial and creative support for the National Archives Experience from individuals, foundations, and corporations who share a belief in the importance of innovative civics education.

### **About the National Archives Experience**

The National Archives Experience, created by the National Archives in partnership with the Foundation for the National Archives, has transformed the visitor experience at the National Archives' Washington, DC building, and includes a renovated Rotunda for the Charters of Freedom, the award-winning Public Vaults permanent interactive exhibition, the William G. McGowan Theater, the Lawrence F. O'Brien Gallery for special exhibits, and the Boeing Learning Center. In addition, the Foundation has taken the Archives nationwide through online initiatives such as the Digital Vaults online exhibit and DocsTeach, a web-based educational resource. These components make the rich resources of the National Archives accessible to Americans nationwide.

### **About the General Motors Foundation**

Since its inception in 1976, the GM Foundation has donated hundreds of millions of dollars to deserving American charities, educational organizations and to disaster relief efforts worldwide. The GM Foundation focuses on supporting Education, Health and Human Services, Environment and Energy and Community Development initiatives, mainly in the communities where GM operates. Funding of the GM Foundation comes solely from GM. The last contribution to the GM Foundation was made in 2001. For more information, visit [www.gm.com/gmfoundation](http://www.gm.com/gmfoundation).