

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Kris Raymond - Grafton Blues Assoc. President

Phone: 262-288-6288

Email: graftonblues@wi.rr.com

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The Mississippi Blues Trail will officially reach Grafton, Wisconsin this month.

To commemorate Grafton's role in American music history, the Mississippi Blues Commission will unveil a trail marker Saturday, September 18, during the 5th Annual Paramount Blues Festival in the village.

The presentation will be made at 3 pm at Lime Kiln Park, near the former site of the Wisconsin Chair Co. factory where many Delta blues musicians were recorded at the Paramount studio in the late 1920's and early '30s. The marker, which will be placed in the Chair Factory Park, will be the first of its kind in Wisconsin.

"The Mississippi Blues Trail markers tell stories through words and images of bluesmen and women and how the places where they lived and the times in which they existed - and continue to exist - influenced their music," the commission stated. "The sites run the gamut from city streets to cotton fields, train depots to cemeteries, and clubs to churches."

Until recently, all the markers were in Mississippi. Out-of-state markers have since been erected in places such as Muscle Shoals, Alabama; Helena, Arkansas; Beale Street in Memphis, Tennessee; and Grant Park in Chicago. The Grafton marker will extend the Mississippi Blues Trail to its northernmost point in the United States.

"The Grafton Blues Association has been working with the Mississippi Blues Trail folks for the past year to make this happen" Kris Raymond President of GBA said, "and we are honored to have it unveiled at the festival."

"The Grafton community is proud of its role in being ground zero for Paramount Records, where many blues artists traveled north to have their songs recorded and produced," Village Administrator Darrell Hofland said.

Village President Jim Brunnquell said the marker is a source of pride for the community. "Grafton recognizes the role Paramount Records played in American music heritage, especially the blues. The blues trail maker publicly offers that recognition," Brunnquell said.

The Grafton marker is funded in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and contributions from the Grafton Blues Association, Village of Grafton, Cary Rentals, Grafton Area Chamber of Commerce and Columbia St. Mary's.