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GIANT ABALONE SCULPTURE TO COMMEMORATE MONTEREY'S 250th BIRTHDAY

Monterey, CA. – In 2020, the City of Monterey is celebrating the 250th anniversary of its founding in 1770. The Monterey City Council has chosen a 15-foot abalone sculpture to commemorate this historic milestone. San Carlos Beach Park was picked as the location for the ceramic tile artwork and it will be unveiled in June of 2020.

“The unveiling of this public art will be a premier event during Monterey 250 celebrations,” said Mayor Clyde Roberson. “It will serve as an enduring landmark for years to come, and honors our entire history from Native Americans to our fishing industry and conservation efforts. We will invite the entire community to celebrate its unveiling in 2020.”

The City of Monterey issued a Call for Public Art in April, and a committee made up of community members and several Boards and Commissions unanimously chose the abalone sculpture by Carmel Valley artists Cara Byrd, Lance Marshall Boen and John Mason. The artists say the monument will “glisten and shine with its metallic and pearlescent colors” on organic shaped tiles and will “serve as a backdrop for thousands of photos.” The exterior mosaic on the front will be held together by steel mesh and rebar. The back of the abalone will have various motifs in Bas-Relief that showcase Monterey’s natural beauty, activities, animals and history.

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NEWS RELEASE

An abalone was chosen as a symbol for the sculpture because of its significance to Monterey history. The mollusk lives on rocks on the shallow marine bottom along the California coast. It was a traditional food source for Ohlone and Esselen Indians for thousands of years, and its colorful and iridescent shell was used for jewelry, fishhooks, decorations and trade items. A large commercial fishery existed on Old Fisherman's Wharf, harvested by innovative Japanese helmet divers. The abalone steak, an international delicacy, was developed on the wharf in 1908. After the sea snail was protected in 1997, sustainable aquaculture farms were introduced to Monterey's Municipal Wharf #2, with a capacity of 300,000 abalone for local and international restaurants.

The project will cost \$100,000 and will be funded by private donations. The Monterey 250 celebration is currently seeking donations and sponsorships. If community members or organizations would like to contribute to "Sestercentennial" projects or events, visit monterey.org/250years/Donate-or-Sponsor to learn about donations and sponsorship opportunities.

To learn more about the history of abalone in Monterey, watch the award-winning City of Monterey documentary at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e04t3XsDJnk>. Monterey 250 events will take place in summer of 2020. Get details and participate by visiting monterey250.org.

