

UNION MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH, RECIPIENT OF 2015 TPTF GRANT AWARD

For Immediate Release: Wednesday, June 1, 2015 (Jefferson, TX) - The Texas Historical Commission awarded a Texas Preservation Trust Fund grant to Union Missionary Baptist Church in an effort to secure the future restoration and rehabilitation of this important historic resource in Jefferson, Texas. The historic significance of UMBC represents the epicenter of African-American religious and political activities in Marion County. While serving the religious needs of the community, the church often hosted Freedmen's Bureau, Radical Republican, and Loyal League activities for the advancement of the African-American community in East Texas.

The Texas Preservation Trust Fund grant is a competitive grant program that awards a one-to-one match for acquisition, survey, restoration, planning, and educational activities leading to the preservation of historic architectural and archeological properties in the state of Texas. Union Missionary Baptist Church was one of 23 preservation projects selected, from 79 initial applications, to be a recipient of the 2015 TPTF grant awards.

The grant award, in the amount of \$30,000, will be used to secure the planning services of Carter Design Associates. Carter Design Associates is a multi-disciplinary architecture, preservation, and planning firm led by Principal Donna Carter, AIA. The funds from the Texas Preservation Trust Fund grant will be matched by the Today Foundation, which is fully committed to the preservation of this piece of Jefferson history. In 2012, the Today Foundation provided Union Missionary Baptist Church with \$27,000 for the stabilization of the structure and to prevent its impending collapse. The Today Foundation, led by Richard Collins, is a leading supporter of preservation in the Jefferson community, creating the Port Jefferson History and Nature Center and advocating for the creation of the Caddo National Heritage Area.

The Today Foundation has collaborated with Partners for Sacred Places, the only national nonprofit organization dedicated to the sound stewardship and active community use of America's historic religious properties. Partners for Sacred Places will oversee the grant award on behalf of the project. Partners has developed a comprehensive five part plan that creates a strong road map to actively engage the community, conduct careful and informed planning, and preserve historic UMBC as a vital community asset.

Mayor Carey B. Heaster, Jr. said, "I'm pleased the Texas Historical Commission has chosen to help restore this Texas landmark and invest in the rich story of the city of Jefferson and Marion County. The unfortunate closure of the church in 2006 threatened the loss of a significant and unique historic site in the state of Texas that will now be saved."

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