

ROSA PARKS BUS

THE STORY
BEHIND THE BUS

SAVE AMERICA'S
TREASURES GRANT
SUPPORTS BUS
RESTORATION

CHRONOLOGY OF
ROSA PARKS &
THE CIVIL RIGHTS
MOVEMENT

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[See images of the restored bus
and a 360° view of the interior](#)

After sitting unprotected in a field for 30 years, it is not surprising that the Rosa Parks bus needs a substantial amount of restoration work. Its seats and engine had been removed, many windows were broken, metal had rusted through and the paint job was a mere shadow of its former self.



The Rosa Parks bus waits in a field in Alabama.

Museum staff, led by conservator Malcolm Collum, carefully examined the vehicle and consulted with various experts. Bids were solicited from three companies interested and qualified to do the restoration work. Finally, MSX International, an automotive engineering and technical services firm headquartered in Southfield, Michigan, was selected to perform the restoration work at a cost in excess of \$300,000.

Museum and MSX employees are researching every aspect of the bus so that the restoration is truly authentic. Original material from this bus will be reused wherever possible and original parts from identical 1948 GM buses will be used when necessary. Our goal is to restore the bus to its condition in 1955, a seven-year-old urban transit coach.

Fortunately, the Museum has found help from the federal government in paying for the restoration.

"The bus in which Rosa Parks helped inaugurate the civil rights movement will be restored in Dearborn, Mich., by the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village." With those words, the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities announced in September 2002 that the Rosa Parks bus project had received \$205,000 in funding through the *Save America's Treasures* Program.

"These *Save America's Treasures* grants help ensure that the nation's priceless cultural heritage will be passed on to future generations of Americans for many years to come. From monuments to manuscripts, the rich and varied stories of American democracy are being preserved and told," said Adair Margo, Chairman of the President's Committee.

The program received 389 grant applications from eligible federal agencies, state, local and tribal governments, and nonprofit organizations. A panel of experts representing preservation and conservation disciplines reviewed the applications and recommended 80 awards totaling \$15.6 million for approval.

Selection criteria required that each project be of national significance, demonstrate an urgent preservation need, have an educational or other public benefit, and demonstrate the likely availability of non-federal matching funds. The Rosa Parks bus qualified in all respects.

The restored bus will be on exhibit in time for the museum's "Celebrate Black History" program beginning February 1, 2003.

For more information about *Save America's Treasures*, see:

www.saveameericastreasures.org

www.arts.gov/endownews/news02/SATannounce.html

www.imls.gov/whatsnew/current/092502.htm



1) Instrument panel; 2) Driver's seat; 3) View from rear of bus; 4) Bus being trucked to MSX International for restoration

