

## **Thanks, Sarah**

We're not sure how she did it, but State Representative Sarah Peake surprised almost everyone on Saturday by announcing that Gov. Deval Patrick had signed legislation exempting the Chatham Marconi Maritime Center from the state's prevailing wage law. The last time the legislation was discussed, just three weeks ago, town officials were not optimistic of its passage.

The bill languished in committees for months after being introduced by Peake in January. It finally went before both the House and Senate in October and was passed by both chambers on Nov. 5. The governor signed it last Friday, Nov. 13.

The bill will save the Marconi group some \$125,000 as it undertakes renovations to the interior of the former operations center at the Orleans Road campus, which will serve as a museum and education center. It helps bring the end of a long road for the group into view, and ensures that the museum will become the centerpiece for the town-owned property. The town must now make an effort to find appropriate uses for the other structures, all of which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places for good reason --- they played a vital role in the development of the communication technology we all take for granted today, and were involved in historic events too numerous to name. Voters will also be asked to appropriate community preservation funds to complete work on the infrastructure of the site, including septic facilities and new, safer driveways.

CMMC officials expressed their gratitude to Peake at Saturday's annual meeting. She also deserves the thanks of the community for shepherding the bill through the complex legislative process in order to help preserve one of the town's most important cultural and historic treasures.

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