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Grand Rapids Gets Labor Monument

Ground was recently broken in Grand Rapids for organized labor's "Spirit of Solidarity" monument, sponsored by the Labor Heritage Society of Western Michigan.

Rising at the entrance to the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum and Ah-Nab-Awen Park, the monument highlights the Furniture Workers Strike of 1911 while also honoring all of organized labor. Turning out in considerable numbers for the groundbreaking were members of Operating Engineers Local 324.

Funds for the monuments design and construction have been raised by the Labor Heritage Society of Western Michigan, with Progressive AE, Grand Rapids, serving as architect and Grand River Construction Inc., Hudsonville, as general contractor. The monument's artist, Roberto Chendo, worked for a time as a member of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters, before being able to venture into stone carving and marble work.

Construction of the monument is expected to be completed by next spring. Subcontractors on the project include:

- Fencing — Fence Erectors of Michigan, South Haven.
- Excavation — Eagle Excavation Inc., Flint.
- Earthwork — Ersco Construction Supply, Wyoming.
- Concrete — Grand River Construction.
- Steel Erection — Bee Steel Inc., Grand Rapids.
- Sand & Gravel — Grand Rapids Gravel Company.
- Granite — Davenport Masonry Inc., Holt.
- Masonry — Hofstra Masonry, Muskegon.
- Mechanical — Franklin-Holwerda Company, Wyoming.
- Electrical — Spencer-Redner Electric Inc., Comstock Park.

The Labor Heritage Society of Western Michigan is made up of members or retirees from the organized construction industry, or individuals interested in the history of organized labor in western Michigan. More information can be found on the group's web site at www.laborheritage.com.