 

**USS Midway Museum and Port of San Diego Break Ground on Freedom Park at Navy Pier**

*Groundbreaking ceremony to launch construction of the largest veterans park on the West Coast*

**WHAT:** The USS Midway Museum and the Port of San Diego will host an important groundbreaking ceremony to kick off the construction of Freedom Park at Navy Pier. This multi-year joint project between Midway and the Port will transform Navy Pier into the largest veterans park on the West Coast.  Along with Midway president and CEO, Terry Kraft and Port chairman, Frank Urtasun, ceremony participants will include U.S. Rep. Scott Peters, Mayor Todd Gloria and Navy Region Southwest chief of staff, Capt. Dwight Clemons.  Each of the participants will make short remarks on the importance of Freedom Park to San Diego as an enhancement of the Embarcadero and a public destination on the waterfront, as well as an ongoing tribute to the men and women who have worn the uniform of our nation.

**WHERE:** Navy Pier, 910 N. Harbor Dr., San Diego, CA

**WHEN:** Thursday, April 25, 2024, at 8:30 a.m.

 *Media are invited to cover the groundbreaking ceremony.*

*Please RSVP to* *dkoontz@midway.org*

*Media are requested to arrive by no later than 8:15 as the event will begin promptly at 8:30 a.m.*

**DETAILS:** Beginning at the west end of Navy Pier and going around Midway to the Bob Hope Memorial, Freedom Park will celebrate the region’s rich military history and tell the story of everyday heroes who served our country and preserved our freedoms. It will provide local San Diegans and out-of-town visitors with unique experiences on the waterfront with numerous public amenities, including a nature garden, memorials and monuments, seating and shading, and interpretive signage. The park is anticipated to open in early 2028.

The California Coastal Commission unanimously approved the development and construction of the park in 2023. In February 2024, the Port’s Board of Commissioners approved an approximately $7.4 million contract with AMG Demolition and Environmental Services, Inc. for demolition of the large headhouse building that sits at the entrance of the pier. The demolition will begin this spring and make way for the construction of Freedom Park.

In the spirit of the pending demolition of the headhouse, the groundbreaking ceremony participants will use golden sledgehammers to “break” cinderblock pavers to officially launch the Freedom Park project.

It’s estimated that Freedom Park will cost approximately $65 million. Currently, $29 million has been committed to the project from the Port, Midway and, with the support of U.S Rep. Peters, through Community Project Funding distributed via the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development. An additional $36 million will be raised by the USS Midway Foundation’s capital campaign committee.

**VISUALS:** Ceremony activities to include guest speakers, sledgehammer ground breaking, unveiling of a Freedom Park model and new artist rendering video of the park.

**INTERVIEWS:** USS Midway Museum and Port officials, U.S Rep. Peters, Mayor Gloria and Capt. Clemons.

**CONTACT:** David Koontz, USS Midway Museum – 619.571.6561/dkoontz@midway.org.

-USS Midway Museum-