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Pioneers are on the move: The monument, that is

The Pioneers Monument – all 500 tons of it – will move to its new home at [B. F. Nelson Park](#) in northeast Minneapolis later this year. The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board of Commissioners (MPRB) has contracted with Jensen Conservation Services, Inc., for the relocation and restoration of the historic monument. Work will begin this summer with completion before Oct. 31, 2010.

This will be the third move for the mammoth monument, which was unveiled in 1936. It was originally situated in Pioneer's Square in downtown Minneapolis. When the City of Minneapolis acquired the park in the early 1960s, the monument was relocated to a small piece of land along Main St. NE and 5th Ave. NE, a move that was meant to be temporary. Now, almost 50 years later, the Pioneers will make one last journey.

To help finance the move, the St. Anthony West Neighborhood Organization (STAWNO) donated \$25,000, a project that resident Michael Rainville Sr. has been working on since the park's master plan was established in 1993.

"We rolled up our sleeves to get this done; we never gave up," he said. "Moving the statue to its new home make our efforts, and those of the Park Board, worthwhile."

"Not only did the neighborhood go out of their way to raise the funds, this fits into the art park design, which has long been envisioned for B. F. Nelson," said Liz Wielinski, District 1 Commissioner. "The statue has been an icon for the city and placing this piece of history with the downtown skyline as the backdrop creates a stunning urban picture postcard view."

In addition to the STAWNO funds, the Park Board received a grant from the City of Minneapolis Arts in Public Spaces program for \$50,000. Remaining funds are provided through the

Minnesota Parks and Trails Legacy Fund.

Jensen Conservation Services, Inc. has worked with the MPRB on similar historic sculptures, including restoration of the monuments and flag pole plaza along Victory Memorial Parkway in north Minneapolis.

About Pioneers Monument

The sculpted granite statue depicting European Pioneers and Native Americans is considered by many to be Minneapolis' most important historic monument. It was the first major artwork commissioned by the Park Board and is the work of John K. Daniels, a nationally renowned Minneapolis sculptor. The cost of the sculpture was \$20,000 paid for by John Pillsbury. The monument is now valued at over \$500,000.

The 23-foot monument, hewn from Minnesota granite, portrays a pioneer family of three generations with a rifle, axe and handle of a plow. On the reverse side of the central group are carved sheaves of grain, representing the product for which Minneapolis and the Northwest have become most famous. Below this symbol is depicted a Native American chief offering a peace pipe to Father Hennepin.

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