

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 25, 2019

Contact: Kyle Obenauer, Agency of Transportation
802-279-7040, Kyle.Obenauer@vermont.gov

Agency of Transportation seeks community's ideas to memorialize Vermont farmer

Barre, Vt. – A maple tree that has stood for more than a century on the former Tenney family farm in Ascutney is dying and will soon be removed for safety reasons by the Vermont Agency of Transportation (AOT), which owns the land.

“The tree has long stood as a symbol and a reminder of Romaine Tenney, his farm, and the broader impact that interstate construction had on the ways people travel, live, and work throughout Vermont.” said AOT Historic Preservation Specialist Kyle Obenauer. “We want to honor Mr. Tenney in a thoughtful, respectful manner that also reflects the community’s wishes.”

Tenney did not wish to yield his land, home, and farm to state officials who sought to take it under eminent domain in 1964 to extend I-91 northward through Vermont. Sheriff’s deputies arrived at his farm with a court order and reluctantly removed machinery and equipment from the barn as Tenney watched from the porch. Later that night, Tenney barricaded himself inside the farmhouse and burned it and his barns to the ground.

AOT will hold a public meeting on Tuesday, October 29th, at 6 p.m., at the Ascutney Fire Station, 540 VT-131, to solicit ideas about how best to honor Romaine Tenney. In coordination with the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, the agency has approved the installation of a state historic marker to memorialize Romaine Tenney at the I-91 Exit 8 Ascutney Park and Ride site of the tree after its removal. An additional idea under consideration is to also somehow repurpose wood from the maple tree after it is removed.

###