

News

Lighthouse Forever Fund Surpasses \$1.7 Million with Two \$25,000 Donations

Contact: City of St. Joseph, 269-983-5541, or Susan Solon, Communications and Marketing Director, ssolon@sjcity.com

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LIGHTHOUSE FOREVER FUND SURPASSES \$1.7 MILLION WITH TWO \$25,000 DONATIONS

(ST. JOSEPH, Mich.) Donors recently made two \$25,000 donations to bring the Lighthouse Forever Fund total to more than \$1.7 million. The first donation came from Roy and Marcia Armes. A second gift was presented to Bob Judd, chairman of the Lighthouse Forever Fund, during the Southwestern Michigan Tourist Council (SWMTC) annual meeting. The SWMTC donation came from local tourism businesses and the Shoreline Assessment District hoteliers.

Steve Wells, president of the SWMTC, said the inner and outer lighthouses in St. Joseph attract hundreds of thousands of visitors to the region year round. "Even though access to the lights on the North Pier is free, these historic icons are vital to our local tourism economy," said Wells.

The Lighthouse Forever Fund now stands at \$1.735 million of the \$2 million needed to restore and preserve the lighthouses. There are, however, sufficient funds to begin exterior and structural renovations to the inner and outer lights in June.

"We have been working with the National Park Service and the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office to restore the lighthouses to their 1932 appearance," said Judd. He added the restorations will require closing access to the North Pier through October but said onlookers can watch the historic transformation from shore or their boats.

Judd encouraged additional donors to help the fund reach its \$2 million goal so the City of St. Joseph has the private funding it needs to also do interior renovations to the inner light and build a replica fog signal. "These renovations will greatly enhance the experience of seeing the lights for generations to come," said Judd.

Anyone interested in contributing to the Lighthouse Forever Fund can make a donation through either the city or the Berrien Community Foundation. For more information about the project or donating to it, visit lighthouseforeverfund.org or contact Susan Solon, City of St. Joseph communications and marketing director, at 269-983-5541 or ssolon@sjcity.com.

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