

# News

## **Preservation Work to Begin on St. Joseph Lighthouses**

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## **EXCITEMENT RUNS HIGH AT ST. JOSEPH CITY COMMISSION MEETING WITH NEWS THAT LIGHTHOUSE PRESERVATION WORK CAN BEGIN**

(ST. JOSEPH, Mich.) Excitement ran high at the Jan. 12 St. Joseph City Commission meeting when Bob Judd, chairman of the Lighthouse Forever Fund committee, announced that the campaign had reached more than \$1.6 million of its \$2 million goal. "Our community can be very proud that it has raised sufficient funds to make the North Pier lighthouses structurally sound for generations to come. This is a very generous community. Thank you."

But Judd asked that the region continue to work toward reaching the final goal. "If you've walked on the North Pier, you know our lighthouses need repair. We have money to start restoration, but we really need the additional money to provide the public with safe access into the lighthouses in the future as well as return them to the historical appearance that was altered over the years."

Judd and the City Commission publicly thanked the Lighthouse Forever Fund's four honorary chairs, John Carter, M.D., Merlin Hanson, Steve Upton and David Whitwam as well as 15 committee members for their assistance. The committee also recognized staff from the City and the Berrien Community Foundation for their research, support and donation tracking and reporting.

"This was a bigger job than a lot of us realized it would be when we started our efforts in 2013," said Judd. "But this community has made it clear that these 107-year-old lighthouses are beloved icons in our area." He said the Lighthouse Forever Fund committee is very grateful to the generous individuals, businesses and organizations that have contributed to the success of the campaign. "Large donations have certainly made our fund grow faster, but it's the grassroots power of many gifts of \$50, \$100 and \$1,000 that have gotten us closer to our goal." Judd said through Jan. 2, the fund has received 492 gifts.

"I think it's important to point out that people from all over the country have donated to this fund," said Lighthouse Forever Fund committee member Bill Marohn.

“These lighthouses connect people to Southwestern Michigan. They are part of thousands of personal stories, countless photographs and numerous adventures. We want to encourage people in our communities, if you know someone living outside the area that cares about these lights, please invite them to help us fund their ‘forever’ preservation and restoration. These lighthouses aren’t just local landmarks, they are national treasures.”

St. Joseph Mayor Michael Garey said the City plans to build a donor recognition wall near the base of the North Pier in Tiscornia Park. To ensure that all contributing individuals, businesses and organizations are listed on the wall, donations to the fund must be received by the end of this summer.

The City outlined the next steps for the preservation of the lighthouses:

First Quarter, 2015: complete/submit Historic Structure Report (HSR) and bid documents to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and National Park Service (NPS) for review

April: begin bidding for basic preservation and restoration work and get alternate bids for specific restoration projects

Early May: bids due

May: City Commission to approve and award contract(s)

June: begin preservation construction; close North Pier for the season

Late October: complete construction; reopen North Pier and dedicate donor recognition wall

Judd said, “We are so close to reaching our goal. If every individual, every business and every organization that loves these sentinels donates to the fund this month, we could make good on our promise to save them forever.”

For more information about the project or to make a donation, visit [www.lighthouseforeverfund.org](http://www.lighthouseforeverfund.org) or contact Susan Solon, City of St. Joseph communications and marketing director, at 269-983-5541 or [ssolon@sjcity.com](mailto:ssolon@sjcity.com).

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