



## **Straits State Harbor Dedication, July 18, 2009 Media Kit**

### **Introduction**

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources is committed to the conservation, protection, management, use and enjoyment of the State's natural resources for current and future generations.

The Waterways component of the Department of Natural Resources, under the auspices of the Michigan State Waterways Commission, works to provide safe public access to the Great Lakes and inland waters of the State of Michigan. Working with partners, the Waterways Commission oversees the use of dedicated funds provided by boaters for the acquisition, construction and operation of the infrastructure needed to support boating. Within that mission, Waterways has a program goal to locate harbors of refuge in such a way that no boater will ever be more than 15 shoreline miles from safety.

The safe harbor capacity in the Mackinac Straits area is currently limited. The Mackinaw City Harbor of Refuge project is intended to reclaim the former Michigan Department of Transportation State Ferry Docks, including remediation of petroleum product storage and handling facilities, to be used as a Harbor of Refuge.

The Straits of Mackinac area is unique with a role as an important link in Michigan's transportation infrastructure, both land and water. And, due to its historic and natural features, the Straits area is one of Michigan's most frequented tourist destinations.

In this context the components of the new Mackinaw City Harbor of Refuge, individually, and in consort, must achieve the following:

- Be functional and friendly for and to its primary users, boaters, and to other users as well.
- Protect and conserve the natural resources of the immediate and surrounding areas and facilitate the management of those resources.
- Make efficient and economic use of funds provided by boaters, and other taxpayers, during initial construction and in future maintenance and operation.
- Be compatible with the surrounding community, including natural and historic features.

Every opportunity to incorporate elements and systems that demonstrate life cycle cost benefits, that are of a sustainable or "green" character and that are visually pleasing must be thoroughly pursued.

Most importantly, the site should be of such a nature that the visitation experience is memorable and repeat visits are inspired.

## **A New Purpose**

What was once a place where Michigan citizens and visitors gathered to have their automobiles transported from Mackinaw City to St. Ignace has been transformed into a new purpose by the State of Michigan.

In the early 1920s, the State Ferry Department purchased 115 feet of water frontage in Mackinaw City for the sum of \$550.20 to construct the first car ferry docks. Hourly trips left the car ferry docks in the summer, and a trip every one and one-half hours was generally maintained for the spring and fall, except during hunting season, when trips were offered hourly between 6:30 a.m. to 11:30 p.m., with additional trips at 1:30 a.m. and 4:30 a.m.

The former state car ferry docks in Mackinaw City once operated by the old Michigan Highway Department (the forerunner to the Michigan Department of Transportation) are now the home to the new Straits State Harbor, a state-of-the-art boating facility featuring 134 slips, 248 parking spaces, 73 car/trailer spaces and a three-lane boating access site.

The car ferry was operated by the state beginning in 1923, transporting automobiles and their occupants across the Straits of Mackinac from Mackinaw City to St. Ignace until Nov. 1, 1957, when the first vehicles crossed the Mackinac Bridge.

The first vessel, Ariel, was a small wooden boat built in 1881 as a river ferry. However, it was found unsuitable for the rough waters of the Straits and relocated in 1926 to transport passengers between Port Huron and Sarnia, Ontario. The State Ferry System operated five vessels during the summer season and contracted with the Mackinac Transportation Company to carry automobiles on the Chief Wawatam and Sainte Marie.

Today, the old car ferry dock area has been renovated into a new state boat harbor, a testament to the popularity of boating in the Great Lakes State.

This new boat harbor offers state-of-the-art amenities for recreational boaters, and has met the requirements for Gold Certification as a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) project. It also has earned a Michigan Department of Environmental Quality "Clean Marina" certification.

## **Green Initiative**

Straits State Harbor is loaded with "green," energy efficient features aimed at not only protecting the environment, but saving money as well.

This project reuses and redevelops the former Michigan Department of Transportation State Ferry Dock and the existing historic elevator building as a harbor operation storage facility. The on-site energy is created by eight Skystream 3.7 (2.3Kw rated) wind turbines. The wind turbines will generate a substantial portion of the harbor's required ice suppression and required boating season energy use.

The fundamental building elements include light sensors, low maintenance materials, air to air heat exchangers, windows that open and an open air atrium for natural thermal cooling in the summer, weather stripping, ultra low flush urinals, low flow shower heads, compact fluorescent lighting, LED

lighting for exit signs, Energy Star-certified appliances and heating units, ultra high efficiency natural gas water heaters, furniture and furnishings made from recycled materials, and use of low VOC (volatile organic compounds) materials.

The lighting inside the interior spaces uses the concept of “light bounce” – a technology using reflective surfaces along with light-colored paint to allow natural day lighting to be refracted. Solar light tubes in the ceiling have been installed to compliment the “light bounce” concept.

Native Michigan woods were incorporated in the design of the building. Native cedar from the Upper Peninsula was used in the ceilings. Also, ash removed due to emerald ash borer infestation in Michigan was used for countertops and window sills.

The grounds of the site feature rain gardens with native wetlands plants for storm water management. Benches and picnic tables are made of recycled plastic products. Open cell turf pavers were used to aid ground water infiltration, significantly reducing surface run-off.

Breakwater stone and harbor shoreline revetment feature native Northern Michigan limestone quarried in the Alpena area. Existing bituminous paving on site was crushed, shaped and re-used for the new bituminous parking lots.

The parking lot lights use low energy bulbs and night sky protection. The metal halide site lighting is segmented into multiple areas, or regions, with automatic lighting control for reduced energy usage in less busy seasons. The pedestrian lighting is solar-powered.

A recycling area is provided to allow boaters and staff to recycle basic items, and brochures will be distributed to boaters detailing larger regional recycling programs and locations. The capability for providing biodiesel fuel for boats is available at the harbor.

An electric battery-operated truck, the Gem eL, will be used for harbor maintenance and operations. An electric push lawn mower will be used on harbor grounds. The local public transit authority will service the harbor, providing boaters with a “green” alternative form of transportation. Additionally, provisions have been made for bicycle use in and around the harbor area.

## **Straits State Harbor Technical Information**

### Construction Timeline

- o Phase I – November 2004 thru December 2005 – Breakwater construction and navigation lights.
- o Phase II – June 2006 thru December 2006 – Dredging, boat launch, shoreline revetment, east end triangle area repair, various utility work, and project fencing.
- o Phase III – July 2008 thru July 2009 – Harbormaster building, site work, parking lots, pavilions, grading, wind turbines, lighting, utilities, fuel system, sanitary pumpout, and irrigation.
- o Phase IV – January 2009 thru July 2009 – Docks, dock utilities, mooring service centers, service pier building, ice suppression, and fire protection.
- o Phases I-IV cost approximately \$10,775,000.

### **Straits State Harbor Amenities**

- o DNR Green Initiative components (see Straits State Harbor Green Initiative Elements)
- o 130 slips and 174' broadside dockage (4 slips)
- o Harbor basin dredged to 6' below International Great Lakes Low Water Datum (577.5 for Lake Huron)
- o Electric and water provided at each slip
- o Gas and diesel fuel sales provided, as well as the capability of providing the sale of biodiesel fuel for boats
- o Sanitary pump-out available
- o Dog run area, trash and recycle area, laundry, grilling area and two covered pavilions provided
- o Ice suppression protecting the floating pier system during the winter
- o Parking for 248 cars and 73 car/trailer
- o Three-lane boating access site
- o Harbormaster building that includes boater showers and restrooms, public restrooms and lounge area.