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'Save Our Lights' License Plates Fund Projects at Six Historic Lighthouses

Department of History, Arts and Libraries Director William Anderson and Michigan Historical Center Director Sandra Clark today announced more than \$145,000 in lighthouse preservation grants to six organizations for 2006.

The Michigan Lighthouse Assistance Program, administered by the State Historic Preservation Office, is funded by proceeds from the sale of the "Save our Lights" license plate. Lighthouse grants are given to state and local governments or nonprofit organizations that are maintaining or restoring a lighthouse. Recipients must provide 50 percent of the grant award as matching funds.

"Lighthouses have become a powerful symbol of Michigan and our rich maritime history," said Anderson. "By choosing the 'Save our Lights' license plates, Michigan drivers can help preserve these important icons."

The Michigan Lighthouse Assistance Program was established to assist in the preservation, restoration, and protection of lighthouses in Michigan. The program arose from a concern about the disposal of over 70 lighthouses in Michigan by the U.S. Coast Guard.

Fiscal Year 2006 Michigan Lighthouse Assistance Program grant recipients include:

- **\$16,000 – St. James Township – Beaver Island St. James Light Tower**
Grant funds will be used to hire a architect/engineer to conduct a structural evaluation of the Beaver Island St. James Light Tower, study the cause for moisture infiltration in the lighthouse, analyze appropriate remedies, and prepare engineering plans and specifications for the recommended work to secure, stabilize and ventilate the tower. Additionally, St. James Township will hire a contractor to make the recommended repairs including metal repair, tower window repair, replace entry door, install tower window vents, and foundation repair. Soil testing will be performed and a report with recommendations will be produced.

(more)

- **\$40,000 – Port Huron Museum of Arts and History – Fort Gratiot Light Station**
The Port Huron Museum of Arts and History, along with the City of Port Huron, will hire an architect to prepare a historic structures report for the Fort Gratiot Light Station, Michigan's oldest lighthouse. This report will guide future restoration efforts for all historic buildings at the site, including the Fort Gratiot Lighthouse, the fog signal building, the lighthouse keeper's residence, the lifesaving station residence, and the U.S. Coast Guard Station.
- **\$6,700 – Gull Rock Lightkeepers – Gull Rock Lighthouse**
The Gull Rock Lighthouse recently transferred ownership from the U.S. Coast Guard to the Michigan Lighthouse Conservancy. The Gull Rock Lightkeepers, along with the Michigan Lighthouse Conservancy, will use grant funds to hire an engineering/construction company to prepare plans and drawings to replace the roof on the Gull Rock Lighthouse as well as the detached outhouse building. The grant budget also provides dollars for temporary patching of holes in the lighthouse roof, until additional funds can be raised to replace the badly deteriorated roof.
- **\$6,325 – Ontonagon County Historical Society – Ontonagon Lighthouse**
Grant funds will be used to hire a architect/engineer to conduct a structural evaluation of the Ontonagon Lighthouse, study the cause for certain structural cracks in the lighthouse, analyze appropriate remedies, and prepare engineering plans and specifications for the recommended work.
- **\$36,367 – Benzie County – Point Betsie Light Station**
With its fourth Michigan Lighthouse Assistance Program grant, Benzie County will receive \$36,367 in grant funds, with a local match of \$18,183, to restore the interior of the Point Betsie Light Station. With an estimated cost of \$134,550 to restore the lighthouse's interior, Benzie County also applied for and received a grant from the Department of Environmental Quality Coastal Management Program for \$40,000, with \$40,000 in local matching funds. Between the two state grant programs and local funds, Benzie County will be able to complete the interior restoration of the Point Betsie Light Station.
- **\$40,000 – Friends of the Round Island Lighthouse, Inc. – Round Island Lighthouse**
Grant funds will be used to repair the foundation of the Round Island Lighthouse, which is failing and allowing moisture to penetrate and damage the deeper layers of the foundation. The grant budget provides dollars to hire a barge for mobilization and demobilization of equipment and supplies such as excavator, concrete, mortar, brick and a crane, which will be used to move the stones around the foundation of the lighthouse, stockpile the stones, then replace the stones around the foundation once the work is complete.

The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) assists in the identification, rehabilitation, and interpretation of Michigan's historic resources. SHPO is a division of the Michigan Historical Center, part of the Department of History, Arts and Libraries (HAL). Dedicated to enriching quality of life and strengthening the economy by providing access to information, preserving and promoting Michigan's heritage and fostering cultural creativity, HAL also includes the Mackinac Island State Park Commission, the Library of Michigan, the Michigan Film Office and the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs. For more information about HAL, visit www.michigan.gov/hal