

Historic Preservation in Michigan



Outer light before



Inner light after

2016 Governor's Award for Historic Preservation

City of St. Joseph, Smay Trombley Architecture, Mihm Enterprises, the Heritage Museum and Cultural Center, the Lighthouse Forever Fund, and the Citizens of St. Joseph

Rehabilitation of the St. Joseph North Pier Inner and Outer Lights

The St. Joseph North Pier Inner and Outer Lights and the adjoining elevated walkway have long been symbols for the City of St. Joseph. They were among five lights featured on U.S. postage stamps in 1995, and during the winter, dramatic images of the ice-encrusted lights and elevated walkways circulate via email and social media.

The U.S. Coast Guard declared the lights excess property in 2008, and the city acquired them through the federal transfer process five years later. Local citizens and organizations donated \$1.8 million to the Lighthouse Forever Fund, which was formed to raise money to pay for the rehabilitation of the structures.

Throughout the project, decisions made and methods implemented were driven by the goal of exceeding the highest historic preservation standards. The rehabilitation of the St. Joseph lights and elevated walkway demonstrates the power of governmental leadership, citizen involvement, and collaboration among experts to preserve historic places that are essential to community identity.