



News for Immediate Release

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Lt. Gov. Joins DCNR to Announce Long-Term Agreement for Public/Private Partnership for Lighthouse at Presque Isle State Park

Erie – Lieutenant Governor Jim Cawley today joined Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Secretary Ellen Ferretti in announcing that the department and the newly created Presque Isle Light Station organization have reached an agreement for a public/private effort to renovate and eventually open to the public the historic lighthouse at Presque Isle State Park in Erie.

DCNR owns the lighthouse and land, which for 141 years has been used as a residence, most recently for state park staff.

The department is entering a 35-year-lease with the non-profit organization, which will then raise funds for restoration work, with the goal being opening the lighthouse to the public.

"This is a great partnership between government and non-profit organizations to continue to improve and expand the resources and services that the Commonwealth provides to its citizens, and ensure that visitors understand the history as well as enjoy the beauty of Presque Isle State Park," Cawley said at an event at the lighthouse today.

The Presque Isle Lighthouse is the second oldest lighthouse on Lake Erie's shore. The lighthouse was built in the 1800s and is on the National Register of Historic Places. Climbing the 78 steps in the tower provides a nice view of Lake Erie.

"Our relationship with the Presque Isle Partnership and the Presque Isle Advisory Committee leading to the creation of the Presque Isle Light Station organization is a true success story, as together, we have been able to accomplish many projects at the park," said Ferretti. "This endeavor will be another shining star on that list of accomplishments."

The lighthouse was conveyed to the Commonwealth on June 10, 1998, by the federal government, but it continues to flash a white light that is maintained by the U.S. Coast Guard.

"We have all come together and are working as partners to develop a plan to make this concept a reality," said Presque Isle Partnership President Alana Handman.

The lighthouse tower will be open to the public July 26 and 27 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. during the Discover Presque Isle weekend. This will be the only time it will be open for the remainder of this year.

The tower and lighthouse will be available to the public on a more regular schedule once further renovations and public access plans are completed. The primary phase of reconstruction involves refurbishing the garage into a visitor gift shop.

The Presque Isle Partnership, in cooperation with the newly created Presque Isle Light Station organization, is beginning plans for overall lighthouse restoration to resemble the architectural style of its early 20th century foundation.

“It is a rare occurrence when the pulse of a community is captured in the essence of a building or a home, but the Presque Isle Lighthouse is such a landmark,” said Presque Isle Light Station Board President Joe Pfadt. “Since 1872, the Presque Isle Light Station has guided sea going vessels off the shores of Lake Erie for safe passage into the harbor, and now it is once again guiding us to a future of community service.”

“Similar to the private spending being done by tremendous partners on this project, resolving our pension crisis would free up additional funds to spend on the important work of state government,” Cawley said. “The state’s current pension crisis consumes 60 cents of every dollar in general fund revenue, and its time the General Assembly address this issue.”

The mission of the Presque Isle Partnership is to enhance the Presque Isle visitor’s experience by developing, funding, and implementing projects and programs on Presque Isle State Park while protecting the natural environment. For information about the Presque Isle Partnership visit www.discoverpi.com.

Presque Isle State Park is the most visited park of the 120 in Pennsylvania, with about 4 million visitors annually.

For more information about Presque Isle or Pennsylvania state parks visit the DCNR website at www.dcnr.state.pa.us.

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