



The Paducah Sun

TUESDAY, November 26, 2013

www.paducahsun.com

Vol. 117 No. 330

Metropolis' lighthouse nearing completion

BY WILL PINKSTON

wpinkston@paducahsun.com

METROPOLIS, Ill. — Seven years of waiting comes down to a few dozen days as substantial construction on the Metropolis Hope Light Project could begin as soon as late December.

The 30-foot-tall lighthouse dedicated to people affected by cancer is expected to be erected in Dorothy Miller Park within the next 30 to 40 days as project leaders continue to raise money through memorial walking path bricks to help provide a monetary

“It’s been a long haul. We’ve been seven years and it didn’t look good for a long time, but we raised enough money through generous donations.

Bill Carrell

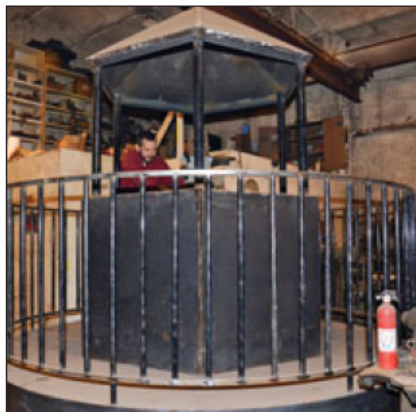
Hope Light Project chairman

cushion for annual maintenance costs independent of city funds.

“It’s been a long haul,” said Alderman Bill Carrell, Hope Light Project chairman. “We’ve been

seven years and it didn’t look good for a long time, but we raised enough money through generous

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Matt Parker, owner of Parker Custom Machine Shop outside Metropolis, Ill., adjusts pieces of the beacon light atop what will become the lantern room that caps the Hope Light lighthouse on Monday. Substantial construction on the Hope Light could begin in late December.

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far-southern Illinois.

The supplies were originally intended for distribution to the Philippines in the wake of Typhoon Haiyan but in light of recent events, the governor requested the items be used in storm-torn communities.

“It is important that all of us come together as a family and help each other,” Quinn said. “Everyone in Illinois is a part of our family and these supplies that have arrived, our state trucks have brought them down over the last day or two and we want to make sure we help folks here in Massac County.”

The governor commended the collaboration between several state and local agencies to establish a Multi-Agency Resource Center where residents can visit to receive disaster-related information and assistance.

American Red Cross regional CEO Cindy Erickson encouraged the community to use the center as a one-stop help center, aiding people in general disaster assistance, housing concerns, debris clean-up,

the Kentucky side of the river, immediately following the severe weather and the recovery efforts in the days following.

Representatives from both Walmart and Home Depot were recognized during Monday’s news conference for donating money, supplies and workers to help the area. Wal-Mart officials presented the Red Cross with a \$100,000 check to help in statewide recovery, and remembered longtime Paducah Wal-Mart employee Kathy George, 58, of Unionville, killed in the tornado.

Pastor David Siere, whose Brookport First Baptist Church has been used as a command center for more than a week, said he couldn’t thank people enough for their devotion to helping the community.

“All I know is this: Everybody who has been a part of this — I don’t care who you are — if you prayed for us or whatever you’ve done, I want to thank you because we’re grateful as a city and a county that you guys

LIGHTHOUSE

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donations. I feel so relieved and excited that an erection date is imminent.”

Aldermen voted 6-1 in favor of a \$25,000 Metropolis Area Tourism Commission grant in June to top off the project’s \$43,000 price tag. The grant came from hotel/motel tax revenue earmarked for tourism projects. The lighthouse will be turned over to the city upon its construction, but the Hope Light Foundation hopes to raise enough money to cover

maintenance.

Local businesses also chipped in their support by donating construction work or materials to see the project come to fruition.

“There’s been a lot of blood, sweat and tears going into this project,” Alderman Richard Corzine said.

The foundation has been poured and, weather-permitting, workers should pour sidewalks in the coming days. The 20-foot tower base lacks several alterations such as the installation of wiring and painting before the 10-foot lantern

room will be affixed to the top and ultimately placed in the park.

The structure will sit in the middle of a memorial brick walking path and feature a 24-hour beacon atop the lantern room.

The lighthouse will be similar in design to the Walton Light in Santa Cruz, Calif., and although it will have a rotating beacon, it will not be a U.S. Coast Guard certified navigational device.

The project lacks about 750-800 memorial bricks for the lighthouse walking

path at about \$35 apiece, or \$70-\$100 for larger bricks that can be engraved with business logos. People wishing to donate or purchase a memorial brick can contact Carrell or Corzine, or take a form from City Hall to mail donations.

“I’m really hoping it gets done by the end of the year,” Corzine said. “It would be a heck of a Christmas present if we can get that up.”

Contact Will Pinkston, a Paducah Sun staff writer, at 270-575-8676 or follow @WCPinkston on Twitter.

The Paducah Sun
 The Paducah Sun is published daily by Paxton Media Group, LLC at 406 Kentucky Avenue, Paducah, KY 42003. Periodical postage paid at Paducah, KY 42003. (270) 575-8600 • USPS 526-180 ISSN: 1050-0030

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