

# METROPOLIS PLANET



Serving Massac County, Illinois since 1865

Vol. 151 No. 27

Wednesday, July 8, 2015

\$1.00

## Hope Light's beacon continues to shine

By Terra Temple  
Planet Reporter  
terra@metropolisplanet.com

It was 10 years ago on the Fourth of July that

Rudy and Beverly Bess began developing their dream of seeing a lighthouse devoted to the fight against cancer located on the Ohio River.

While it took nine of

those 10 years to see that dream become a reality, that reality has come a long way since the Metropolis Hope Light lighthouse was erected in Metropolis' Dorothy Miller

Park on June 4, 2014.

That 10-year anniversary and the observation of America's 239th birthday were recognized last week by the placing of an American flag on the lighthouse

in time for the Fourth of July holiday.

"On the Fourth of July 2005, Bev and I awoke to find that her 32-year-old friend died from cancer at 3 in the morning, and I later found that my cousin's 22-year-old son died from cancer at 3:15 in the same morning," Rudy Bess said. "It was on this day when we decided that we needed to establish an organization and multi-media/multi-venue systems to increase the awareness of cancer and promote early detection."

That year, the couple founded Hope Light Foundation, a 501c3 non-profit public charity established with the goal of communicating awareness of cancer signs and symptoms in order to increase early cancer detection and survivorship. As lighthouse lovers, the couple's first thought was to build lighthouses along the Ohio River with each dedicated to the fight against cancer by the daymark band representing a particular type of cancer.

The Metropolis Hope Light's teal daymark band represents the fight against ovarian cancer. Its lantern room represents the dark journey cancer patients go through. The white tower is a tribute to the fight against lung cancer. The light represents hope.

"We're not an official aid to navigation (on the river)," Bess emphasized, "but we are an official navigator to help people navigate through the process of fighting cancer. We want to give them information."

That information is supplied in two ways: the foundation's website — [hopelightproject.com](http://hopelightproject.com); and the Cancer Corners established at 14 libraries in Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky and Missouri, the first being at the Metropolis Public Library.

In early June, signs pointing motorists to the Hope Light were erected by the Illinois Department of Transportation on the Exit 37 attraction boards of Interstate 24 with trailblazer signs marking the way to the location.

"These signs mean the lighthouse is an official state attraction," Bess said. "This could not have been done without the support of IDOT, the Illinois Office of Tourism, Southernmost Illinois Tourism Bureau and the Greater Metropolis Convention & Visitors Bureau."

Additional personalized bricks were installed around the lighthouse's base on June 10 by Liberty Utilities employees John Leonard, Darrell Bunting, Jeff Spore and Jimmy Casey.

New single brick order forms provide space for donors to enter contact information when a brick is purchased in memory or honor of someone. A personalized tribute card will be sent to that the identified individual. Order forms are available at Metropolis Chamber of Commerce, Metropolis City Hall, Metropolis Public Library or City National Bank; or through [www.hopelightproject.com](http://www.hopelightproject.com) or [facebook.com/MetropolisHopeLight](http://facebook.com/MetropolisHopeLight).

Personalized bricks are available in three style options: a 4x8 is \$35; an 8x8 with writing only is \$70; or an 8x8 with a logo and writing is \$100.

In addition, those who have purchased a brick in the last 12 months and would like to have a tribute card sent to an individual are asked complete the "contact us" form on the Hope Light Foundation website — [www.hopelightproject.com/contact-us.html](http://www.hopelightproject.com/contact-us.html) — and place the following in the comments window: the purchaser's name as it should appear on the tribute card, the brick order date, the recipient's name an address and the brick's inscription.

Donations to the Metropolis Hope Light Project are also being accepted to go toward the lighthouse's maintenance costs. All of these donations are tax deductible to the nonprofit public charity. They can be made at City National Bank where the project account is established.



An American flag placed on the Metropolis Hope Light for the Fourth of July observes not only America's 239th birthday but also the 10-year anniversary Hope Light Foundation.

— Michele Longworth | Metropolis Planet



Left: A trailblazer sign located near the intersection of 10th and Girard streets points visitors to the Metropolis Hope Light. Attraction signs are also located at Exit 37 of Interstate 24. Below: John Leonard makes room to place a new batch of personalized bricks around the base of the lighthouse. Other volunteers from Liberty Utilities assisting with the project were Darrell Bunting, Jeff Spore and Jimmy Casey.

— Linda Kennedy | Metropolis Planet



## Commissioners announce possible courthouse committee members

By Michele Longworth  
Planet Reporter  
Reporter@metropolisplanet.com

The potential committee members to evaluate what the county board should do regarding the courthouse were announced during Tuesday morning's meeting, as Commission Chair Jayson Farmer said Eric Weflen and Kevin Meyer from RQAW engineering firm would be in town on Wednesday, July 22 with the task of presenting the information from the feasibility study to the committee members.

The names the commissioners had discussed include: Mike Souders, Sue Sandusky, Chris Cro-

meenes, Gloria McGee, Sam Stratemeyer, Rollo Burnett, Chad Lewis, Cheryl Vanderford, Carl Johnson Sr. and Ron Ashby. Some of the individuals have already been contacted. Those who have not been contacted will be called in the coming days by one of the commissioners. The meeting on July 22 will take place in the large courtroom and will be open to the public.

Farmer reiterated the committee's goal, as he sees it, would be to hear about each of the options, and help advise the county as to which the best option would be and also to help garner support from the community for the option that is chosen.

The commissioners entered into

a closed session at 10:07 a.m. with the last prospective candidate for the Massac County Emergency Service Disaster Agency (ESDA) director's position. The board returned to open session at 10:25 a.m. and later in the meeting, Farmer said next week's agenda would include action to hire a new ESDA director.

During Massac County Treasurer Dana Angelly's presentation, she indicated it looked like the real estate tax bills will likely be mailed out sometime toward the end of the month. Angelly told the board the auditors from Cape Girardeau would be there on July 20 to complete the

See COMMITTEE, page 9A