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Tenth anniversary of Hope Light is recognized a number of ways

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While 2015 marks the 10th anniversary of a dream, this month marks the first year of the dream becoming a reality.

It's a year that the Metropolis Hope Light is marking in a number of ways.

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In July 2005 after learning of the loss of two dear people in their lives, Rudy and Beverly Bess, formerly of Metropolis, began developing their dream of seeing a lighthouse devoted to the fight against cancer located on the Ohio River. It took nine of those 10 years for the Metropolis Hope Light lighthouse to be erected in Metropolis' Dorothy Miller Park on June 4, 2014.

Five months later, on Nov. 5, 2014, that beacon of hope was officially lit during a dedication and lighting ceremony.

In the months since, the Hope Light Foundation has noted its anniversary in a number of ways.

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 trail-blazer signs marking the way to the location.

"These signs mean the lighthouse is an official state attraction," Rudy 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."

In September, the lighthouse officially became a participating location in the United States Lighthouse Society's (USLHS) Passport Program. Stamping is available at the Metropolis Chamber of Commerce.

"We have had a number of Society members who have recently passed away after battling cancer, so the Hope Light Foundation's purpose is near and dear to our hearts," said USLHS' Skip Sherwood. "The Foundation's mission is well worth including in

our stamp program."

In October, the availability of Hope Light patches was added to the list. Also available at the Metro•Chamber, along with T-shirts, there are two design choices of the 3-inch, iron-on patch — one looks west with I-24 bridge in the background while the other looks east with the railroad bridge in the background.

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Similar to the mission of a real lighthouse, the Metropolis Lighthouse was designed to save lives by navigating people to cancer awareness information.

That message is in the lighthouse itself. 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.

Hope Light Foundation is 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. While the lighthouse provides a beacon of hope to cancer patients, the Cancer Corners — established at 14 libraries in Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky and Missouri, the first being at the Metropolis Public Library — provide information to them and their loved ones.

Personalized bricks at the Metropolis Hope Light are still available. Three style options are available ranging from \$35 to \$100.

They can be ordered at Metropolis Chamber of Commerce, Metropolis City Hall, Metropolis Public Library or City National Bank; or through www.hopelightproject.com or [facebook.com/MetropolisHopeLight](https://www.facebook.com/MetropolisHopeLight).

Donations to the MHLF are also being accepted to go toward the lighthouse's maintenance costs. All donations are tax deductible. They can be made at City National Bank where the project account is established. If requested by the donor, tribute cards can be mailed to those being honored.