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Door County Maritime Museum breaks ground on construction of new lighthouse tower

WEDC will provide \$250,000 to the City of Sturgeon Bay to help fund the project

MADISON, WI. NOV. 19, 2019 – The Board of Directors of the Door County Maritime Museum (DCMM), along with developers, donors and local officials, broke ground on the 10-story Maritime Lighthouse Tower museum expansion Wednesday, signaling the start of construction activities.

The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) is supporting the project with a \$250,000 Community Development Investment Grant. The project is expected to be completed by the end of October 2020.

“This project will not only draw new and returning visitors to the Door County Maritime Museum and promote firm foundations for ongoing economic growth, but it also will create educational experiences for visitors, keep history alive and help to promote interest in maritime-related local career opportunities,” said WEDC Secretary and CEO Missy Hughes. “This project has been a real community effort, and I look forward to seeing the lighthouse tower become one of the major attractions in Door County.”

“This is a historic day that has been a long time coming for the Door County Maritime Museum,” said John R. Asher, CEO of Roen Salvage Company and DCMM board member. “So many people have worked very hard for many years to make this dream a reality. This project will be a significant economic stimulus that will bring long-term stability to the museum and more business to many others throughout Sturgeon Bay and Door County.”

The Museum Board also recently announced the receipt of a \$1 million pledge from the George Kress Foundation and announced the selection of the Boldt Company as the general contractor for the Maritime Lighthouse Tower.

The groundbreaking event included remarks from DCMM Board President William Harder and Executive Director Kevin Osgood; Bob DeKoch, president of the Boldt Company; and Green Bay Packaging President Will Kress.

The Kress family’s charitable foundation has been supporting the Green Bay area for years. Will’s father, James F. Kress and his love for Door County also inspired the \$1 million donation.

“We congratulate the members and the board of the Door County Maritime Museum on this wonderful investment,” said DeKoch. “It is a very important project for the community of Sturgeon Bay and all of the Door County region. It expresses a huge commitment and vote of

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confidence to the mission of the museum. It is an exciting celebration of the maritime heritage of the area. We at Boldt are honored to be part of bringing this vision to reality.”

The Maritime Lighthouse Tower, situated along the Sturgeon Bay inner harbor, will offer 10 floors of creative and interactive educational displays that will feature highlights of maritime history. Educational programs at the newly renovated museum will emphasize the science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) skills used throughout the maritime and marine industries and in careers vital to the economy of Door County.

The tower is planned to be the flagship for the museum’s new approach to attracting and connecting with visitors. According to the city, the new Maritime Lighthouse Tower will become a must-see maritime experience that will draw visitors from near and far, generating interest and activity and creating a significant economic boost for an already prominent tourist destination.

WEDC’s Community Development Investment Grant Program supports community development and redevelopment efforts, primarily in downtown areas. The matching grants are awarded based on the ability of applicants to demonstrate the economic impact of the proposed project, including public and private partnership development, financial need and use of sustainable downtown development practices.

Since the program’s inception in 2013, WEDC has awarded more than \$24 million in Community Development Investment Grants to 101 communities for projects expected to generate more than \$500 million in capital investments statewide.

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About the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation

The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) leads economic development efforts for the state by advancing and maximizing opportunities in Wisconsin for businesses, communities and people to thrive in a globally competitive environment. Working with more than 600 regional and local partners, WEDC develops and delivers solutions representative of a highly responsive and coordinated economic development network. Visit wedc.org or follow WEDC on Twitter @WEDCNews to learn more.

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