

McGulpin Point to be re-lighted May 30, 2009

By Terry Pepper

As Dick indicated in his President's message on page 2 of this issue, the McGulpin Point lighthouse was purchased by Emmet County earlier this year. We heartily applaud this forward-thinking move made by Emmet County, as once lighthouses pass into private ownership, they virtually never return into the "public domain."

The lighthouse and property have been maintained in excellent condition by the various owners since 1913. A full bathroom has been retrofitted into the dwelling on the first floor and a half bathroom on the second floor, and the old summer kitchen has been converted into a beautiful kitchen with all the modern amenities. With the exception of these modifications, the entire remainder of the dwelling is in near original condition with all the original doors, windows and casework still in place. With Emmet County serving as the new owner of the building and grounds, and a Commission formed to ensure that the proud history of the



It will be a great day when a lantern is once again installed on the McGulpin Point tower
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Dick Moehl(l) with Emmet County Controller Lyn Johnson(c) and Emmet County Commission Chairman Jim Tamlyn(r) on the gallery deck at McGulpin Point lighthouse in March 2008

station is interpreted appropriately, we can all look forward to touring the facility in the near future.

GLLKA is very proud to have been asked to play a key role in this initiative since its inception early in the spring, when we toured the facility with some of the County Commissioners, to brainstorm possible ways in which the light station could be adapted and interpreted. I was proud to be asked to make a presentation on the historical context of the light station and the positive ramifications of eventually opening the station to the public could have on the local economy before the Board of Commissioners, one week before they voted their approval of the purchase of the station.

As soon as approval of the purchase was obtained, a new seven member "Emmet County Historical Commission" was created by the County to formulate long-term plans not only for the McGulpin Point lighthouse, but for all historic county interests. This commission is made up of a broad-based group of members to ensure that numerous view points are considered, and we are proud to report that GLLKA's Sandy Planisek is serving as chairperson of

the Commission, and Dick Moehl is serving as one of the Commissioners.

This Commission has put together an aggressive plan for the McGulpin Point lighthouse. Not only does it call for opening the lighthouse to the public next year, but also includes the establishment of a parking area for visitors, and the installation of a new lantern and optic in the tower. This fall, application was made to the US Coast Guard to re-establish the McGulpin Point light as a Class II Private Aid to Navigation (PATON), with Coast Guard approval officially signed on November 11, 2008. Plans are in place to remove a number of trees in front of the lighthouse, and on May 30th, 2009 the McGulpin Point lighthouse will shine its light across the Straits of Mackinac for the first time since its light was extinguished in 1906.

A gala celebration of the relighting is planned from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM on May 30, with music, historical interpretation, food and beverages served at the lighthouse, with the actual relighting ceremony planned for noon. Numerous dignitaries will be present, and the public is cordially invited to attend this momentous occasion.