



MARITIME HERITAGE ALLIANCE

IMMEDIATE RELEASE CONTACT: Richard Brauer
November 13, 2003 Maritime Heritage Alliance
(231) 941-0850

Jim Cooper
Light & Power
(231) 932-4560

Maritime Heritage Alliance
to develop waterfront history center

TRAVERSE CITY, MI – The Maritime Heritage Alliance (MHA) of Traverse City, MI, is taking the first steps toward establishing a permanent education center on the shore of West Grand Traverse Bay.

The shoreline property borders M-22, adjacent to the Light & Power deep-water dock and the Elmwood Township Park. The MHA released preliminary development plans at the Traverse City Light & Power board meeting on November 11. In October, Light & Power granted the MHA a 20-year lease on the land for \$1 per year, opening the way for this unprecedented community project. The scheduled decommissioning of the coal-fired Bayside Power Plant in 2003 will allow for alternate uses of the Light & Power dock area that in the past was used primarily for offloading of coal for the plant.

"Light and Power has provided the MHA with a tremendous opportunity to serve the Grand Traverse area with a waterfront site to display Great Lakes history where it belongs, on the water," said Rich Brauer, MHA president.

The MHA is a non-profit organization founded in 1982 on the principle of preserving Great Lakes nautical history for current and future generations. The group is owner and steward of both official State of Michigan tall ships: the 92 foot schooner MADELINE, a replica of an 1845 trading vessel that was Traverse City's first non-Indian school, and the 1755 sloop of war WELCOME, a replica of the British ship that carried the stones across the turbulent straits to build the walls of Fort Mackinac on Mackinac Island.

"Our ability to do this is an added benefit of the Bayside Plant removal, and it also represents another way that we are investing our resources in the community," said Light & Power Board Chair Fred Nelson. "A permanent education center located on West Bay will help cultivate respect for this community's maritime heritage while providing an opportunity for hands-on education. We have had a history of support for MHA, and this new community resource is the culmination of that relationship."

In 1995, Light & Power supported MHA plans to receive a state grant to build floating docks attached to the coal dock to serve as a year-round mooring for the MADELINE. For several years, Light & Power has also allowed the MHA to store boats prior to the maritime group's annual spring auction. Light & Power has also provided cranes and trucks to help transport MHA equipment.

Traverse City Light & Power provides municipal electric service to over 10,000 residential, commercial and industrial customers in Traverse City, and parts of Blair, East Bay, Elmwood, Garfield, Peninsula and Paradise townships.

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