

PRESS RELEASE

Mayor's Office • 100 East Michigan Blvd. • Michigan City, IN 46360 • (219)873-1400 • Fax: (219)873-1515

www.emichigancity.com

For Immediate Release

Date: February 26, 2004

Army Corps of Engineers To Begin Breakwater Project in Spring 2004

Michigan City, IN (February 26, 2004) – Mayor Chuck Oberlie announced that the East Breakwater at Washington Park beachfront will be renovated in 2004 because of wind and wave damage the structure has experienced.

Col. Gary E. Johnston, Commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Chicago District, said, "The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has been involved in building and maintaining the Michigan City Harbor since the 1830s. With this project, we'll be rebuilding a portion of the breakwater structure to keep it functioning well into the future."

"The original structure was built in 1834. How did they build it?," asked Tim Frame, Michigan City Port Authority Harbor Master. "They built wooden cribs in Chicago and floated them across Lake Michigan into their position. Then the cribs were filled with rocks until the cribs sank. Then the cribs were filled in with more aggregate materials until they were completely filled. A concrete slab was poured over the cribs. Those original wooden cribs and rocks are still in place today."

The concrete slab in place today was replaced in the late 1930's and again in 1965. The rebuilt East Breakwater will be both wider and higher than it is currently. The harbor side will be excavated, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will create concrete footings, a wall, and a new concrete slab on top. The first two-to-four layers of the timber cribs will be cut back, and an angled concrete pad will be installed. The existing concrete slab (sidewalk area) is approximately 12 foot wide. The new slab/sidewalk will be 18 foot across and will be about one foot higher than it is currently. The slight curve in the breakwater will be straightened.

The bollards, those concrete pillars that are on the lake-side of the structure, will be replaced with historically-correct bollards, but there will be no ropes or chains connecting them (as there were on the originals) so that access and visibility are enhanced.

On the harbor side of the breakwater, lights matching those used in other areas of Washington Park and along Franklin Street will be installed along with park benches and trash receptacles.

“This project should begin in March or April, and the goal is to have the project completed in September,” said Harbormaster Frame. “We don’t expect the breakwater project to interfere with anything else on the basin. Boaters will have the access they’ve always had, and there will be no disruption to the slip holders.”

Michigan City Parks & Recreation Superintendent Darrell Garbacik said, “I appreciate the well-conceived plan the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has developed for access to Washington Park and our beaches during the construction project. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ equipment will be staged in a fenced-off area near the boat launches. There will be temporary stairs constructed from the beach at both ends of the breakwater so that the pier will be accessible throughout the project. No swimming will be disrupted. We can still play volleyball on the beach, and the view of the lighthouse will not be obstructed.”

#####

Contact: Tim Frame **Phone:** 219/872-1712 **E-mail:** tframe@mcmarina.org