



Michigan Humanities Council
Bridging Communities and Ideas



**GREAT LAKES
SHIPWRECK**
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE -- July 2, 2006

Contact: Scott Hirko, Michigan Humanities Council, shirko@mihumanities.org, 517-372-0029 ext. 25
Sean Ley, Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society, sley@up.net, 906-635-1742

SURFBOAT HOUSE EXHIBIT OPENS TO PUBLIC WITH \$15,000 HUMANITIES GRANT

(PARADISE)-----The Michigan Humanities Council (MHC) and the Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society announce the grand opening of the new Surfboat House Exhibit at the Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum at Whitefish Point. The exhibit was awarded a \$15,000 public humanities project grant from the Michigan Humanities Council last year to assist with the construction of the exhibit, as well as additional support from the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

"This project is a wonderful example of using public humanities programming to preserve our history and educate our citizens through interpretive exhibits," stated Janice Fedewa, executive director of the Michigan Humanities Council. "The Surfboat House Exhibit will provide a great opportunity for the public to become involved in an important part of Michigan, and American, history."

The Surfboat House exhibit features the story of the U.S. Lifesaving Service and the U.S. Coast Guard along Lake Superior's Shipwreck Coast; a replica Beach Cart which carried beach rescue equipment; and a replica Beebe-McClellan 26-foot handmade surfboat. Exhibits also include a variety of artifacts and descriptive panels detailing the maritime culture and the role of the agencies in America's growing maritime trade.

"The memory of the heroic men and women of the U.S. Life-Saving Service on the Great Lakes - 1876 to 1915 - has not been well preserved," said Sean Ley, development officer for the Great Lakes Shipwreck Society. "It is a tribute to our State that Michigan Humanities Council has chosen to fund beautiful descriptive panels that tell the complete story of this group of rescuers along Lake Superior's Shipwreck Coast. It is our hope that this project will lead to research by other maritime groups in Michigan that will discover amazing stories about what the Life-Savers did for their local communities."

"The Surfboat House exhibit will be a good way to celebrate maritime culture in Michigan," stated U.S. Sen. Carl Levin. "It is important that we honor the role that the U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. Lifesaving Services have played in Michigan's history, and I am happy to support this effort to do that."

"The Surfboat House exhibit will be an important tribute to the role the U.S. Lifesaving Service and the U.S. Coast Guard have played in Michigan history," said Congressman Bart Stupak (D-Menominee). "I am pleased to see the funding delivered for this valuable educational exhibit."

The Michigan Humanities Council, founded in 1974, is the state's independent, non-profit affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. For additional information on the Michigan Humanities Council, please visit: www.michiganhumanities.org or call 517-372-7770.

#####