

## ***Portage Lake Harbor Commission Report February 20, 2013***

In an effort to provide the very latest information on our Harbor, we spoke with DNR Director Keith Creagh on Tuesday (2/19/13). We discussed where the State was relative to funding their new initiative to dredge Michigan Harbors and in particular Portage Lake and its infrastructure repair. While the final "formal" documents are not through the various committees for approval, the consensus is that Michigan will fund Harbor dredging along our Lake Michigan coastline and Portage Lake will be one of the harbors. It is anticipated we will be dredged in the spring or early summer.

Also proposed is that our long overdue infrastructure repair will be initiated after the dredging work is complete. With over 800,000 boats using Michigan Harbors yearly and funding over 51,000 jobs, boating is essential to the economic health of Onekama and all harbor towns. We feel fortunate to have the support of the Governor, our Senators, Congressman and Representatives with D.N.R. Director Creagh and the Michigan Waterways Commission playing key rolls in making this happen.

Current facts as we know them are that over 20 million is proposed by the State for harbor dredging in 2013. We understand that 8.8 million will be re-directed from the Michigan Waterways Fund budget and 11.5 million will be garnered from the State's "General Fund". Also proposed for 2014 are funds of 9.4 million provided by the Michigan Department of Transportation and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund. The DNR has also requested another 6.9 million for 2014 for Recreational Boating Projects.

Additionally, the Portage Lake Harbor Commission is currently assisting the Village of Onekama in its efforts to make the Village Park launch ramp usable by the public in 2013. We are working with Village officials and hope to convince the State to provide funding to extend the dock and concrete launch pad so vehicles with trailers can launch and haul their boats without damage. Loss of the use of this ramp would increase economic loss to Onekama in a time when we need every fisherman and tourist! The Harbor Commission will address the issues at the February 27<sup>th</sup> meeting in Lansing with Director Ron Olson. We also understand the DNR is planning on making the DNR / Twp Ramp at the Northwest end of Portage usable in 2013 which we were assured includes some form of dredging.

Finally the PLHC strongly suggests all interested citizens continue to E.M., fax, call or write our State and Federal officials, to thank them for their support of Portage Lake and our channel and urge them to keep working for us. Also, to Representative Ray Franz of Onekama for his persistent hard work representing our Village and Township. If you have questions or would like addresses, phone numbers etc. of all our political supporters who made this dredging possible, please call 231-889-5000 at anytime and thank you for supporting Portage Lake Harbor and Onekama.

Best Regards,

Jim Mrozinski  
Chairman  
Portage Lake Harbor Commission