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## **FISH ON!**

### **NEW MANISTEE LAKE PIER WILL MIX BUSINESS WITH PLEASURE**

*You are cordially invited to attend a community introduction and ribbon cutting of the new Manistee Lake – Stronach Fishing Pier to be held on **Tuesday, November 25, 2008 at 11 a.m. at the new pier location in Stronach** on Manistee Lake. Representatives from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Stronach Township, Abonmarche and other organizations will be on hand to discuss and answer questions about the pier and the area fishery. For more information, call 231-723-4325.*

**Stronach Township, Michigan** – The calls of “Fish On!” will soon echo from anglers on a new Manistee Lake fishing pier who are hooked up to giant rainbow trout, steelhead that are fresh from Lake Michigan and spoiling for a fight.

In addition to the thrill of the fighting fish, those cries of excitement also mean big business for Manistee County and Michigan.

The new pier, to be officially opened on November 25, 2008, is located on Manistee Lake in Manistee County’s Stronach Township at the Stronach Boat Launch facility that is managed by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. The pier is near the mouth of the storied Little Manistee River that annually attracts large runs of steelhead, Chinook and Coho Salmon

This universally accessible pier, funded under a \$289,400 grant from the Great Lakes Fishery Trust, will become an angling host spot for Michigan and Manistee County -- global destinations for sport anglers who annual spend \$45 billion in the nation with a total economic impact of \$125 billion. A second fishing pier, also funded the Fishery Trust grant, will be installed in 2009 at the Arthur Street boat launch, located within the City of Manistee off of US 31 and in close proximity to the mouth of Big Manistee River, where sport anglers annually harvest about 30,000 salmon and 18,000 steelhead each year.

“Those ‘fish on’ calls are music to our ears and to the businesses who serve anglers in Manistee County and throughout Michigan,” said state Department of Natural Resources Regional Fisheries Chief Todd Kalish. “We have one of the most diverse and abundant fisheries in the world at our doorstep. It is a resource to be treasured, nurtured and enjoyed by people of all abilities and interests. Manistee County is the birthplace of Pacific Salmon in Michigan and remains as one of our most vital fishery resources, including our Little Manistee River weir and egg taking operation that supports steelhead populations throughout the Great Lakes system.”

In addition to salmon and steelhead, Manistee Lake also hosts excellent populations of smallmouth bass, walleye, yellow perch, bluegill, black crappie and largemouth bass. The prehistoric Sturgeon travels through Manistee Lake from Lake Michigan to spawning grounds in the Big Manistee River. Restoration of sturgeon populations is a priority of the Great Lakes Fishery Trust and is the symbolic logo of the organization. The pier also provides a new site of access for bird watching, family outings and other forms of recreation.

In Manistee County, where the economic impact of recreational fishing for salmon and trout species is estimated at \$3 million a year, the new pier is also part of a bold new initiative to make the County a premier destination for access to water resources by people of all abilities.

The initiative is fueled in part by a \$20,000 grant by Michigan Easter Seals to the Manistee County Community Foundation to help the community identify funding sources to make the County’s bounty of streams, lakes, rivers, and Lake Michigan waters available and accessible to all people, including those with physical challenges. The Easter Seals project, funded through a U. S. Department of Agriculture grant, followed on the heels of “Envision Manistee County,” a county-wide visioning effort completed in 2006 involving over 700 people and a Small Town Design Initiative, led by Michigan State University, that developed design concepts for all of Manistee County.

The “Access to Fresh Water” initiative is led by the Manistee-based Alliance for Economic Success in partnership with the Manistee County Community Foundation. Participants from

the DNR, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, Little River Band of Ottawa Indians, City of Manistee, Stronach Township, Manistee County Sport Fishing Association, Manistee Charter Boat Association and Manistee Convention and Visitors Bureau all participated in a steering committee to guide the two pier projects funded by the Fishery Trust grant that was authored by Laura Heintzelman, new Executive Director of the Manistee County Community Foundation.

The engineering firm Abonmarche, with locations in Benton Harbor, Manistee, South Bend and Fort Wayne, was selected through a competitive process to oversee the design, construction and installation of both fishing piers.

The Stronach Pier is constructed of welded aluminum with floats that will allow the pier to move up and down as water levels fluctuate. It includes benches, railings and slots for fish to be landed by net. The pier was designed to accommodate approximately 20 people. The pier structure conforms to Americans with Disabilities (ADA) guidelines. The input of all interests was sought during the design of the facility to ensure that it would meet the needs of all users. Signage about the facility will be installed in 2009.

The Stronach Boat Launch is owned by Stronach Township and managed by the DNR. The site includes a small boat launch, a large parking area and restroom facilities.

The Great Lakes Fishery Trust (GLFT) was created in May 1996 by a court settlement to compensate the residents of Michigan for the lost use and enjoyment of the fishery resources of Lake Michigan caused by the operation of the Ludington Pumped Storage Plant. The GLFT grants funds to focus on: research to increase benefits involved with Great Lakes fisheries; rehabilitation of lake trout, sturgeon and other fish populations; protection and enhancement of fisheries habitats; public education about the Great Lakes fisheries and acquisition of property or the provision of access to support the Great Lakes fisheries. The Trust is administered by a Board of Trustees, with the DNR director serving as Board chair. Since 1998, the GLFT has provided in excess of \$40 million in grants and holds about \$24 million in fund assets.

Manistee County is also seeking to participate in a Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative, developed by the GLFT to support community stewardship of fresh water. The project connects K-12 schools with their communities to create opportunities for learning that are meaningful for students and have a lasting impact on water resources. Manistee Area Public Schools is taking a lead role in pursuing this Fishery Trust Initiative.