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## **Extra, extra! Crowdfunding campaign to raise funds for Belle Isle's iconic Newsboy Shelter**

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources, the Belle Isle Conservancy, and the Michigan Press Association are banking on a new campaign to raise funds to restore one of the oldest and most iconic structures in Belle Isle Park – the Newsboy Shelter. The partnering agencies are using the Michigan-based crowdfunding platform Patronicity.

Shelter #1 – also known as the Newsboy Shelter and located on Central Avenue near the Belle Isle Park entrance – has been a popular destination for visitors to hold picnics, social gatherings and family reunions for many generations. Built in 1911, the shelter got its name from its proximity to the nearby newsboy statue that was dedicated to the city of Detroit in the early 1900s by James Scripps, founder and publisher of The Detroit News. Today, the shelter is in need of major restoration to ensure that it doesn't fall into permanent disrepair. .

The Newsboy Shelter is a unique architectural asset and structure because of its cedar-shingled roof, conical turrets, columns and hand-crafted wood details. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Unfortunately, the structure is not stable and was at risk from becoming a total loss with one strong storm. The shelter has been stabilized with a support structure and the roof has been covered with a protective membrane. A shelter with this type of architecture and history is rare, and likely will never again be constructed in the same way.

“While there has been an incredible amount of investment in park improvements by the DNR and the Belle Isle Conservancy since the island became a state park, there are simply not enough resources to address all of the needs in the park,” said Michele Hodges, president of the Belle Isle Conservancy. “We are being creative and tapping into platforms such as Patronicity to diversify revenue streams to address much-needed park improvements. The Newsboy Shelter campaign is one way for passionate individuals and groups to take action and make a contribution to help preserve these special places that we all love.”

To address the structure's severely deteriorated condition (including the rotted wooden joists and roof), the Belle Isle Conservancy and DNR are raising funds at [www.patronicity.com/newsboy](http://www.patronicity.com/newsboy). They aim to raise \$50,000 by June 30. Donors can make 100-percent tax-deductible donations and will be recognized through a number of donor perks.

Patronicity is a Detroit-based crowdfunding platform that has successfully been used to raise funds for projects including the restoration of the log cabin at Palmer Park, the Detroit Kite Festival and other community-supported projects in Detroit and across the country.

"This fundraising effort at Belle Isle is one of many examples of the continued revitalization made possible by our many partners, including the Belle Isle Conservancy, the city of Detroit, Detroit citizens and other partners across the state," said Ron Olson, chief of the DNR Parks and Recreation Division. "This much-needed renovation will ensure that visitors will enjoy this historic structure with their friends and families for years to come. I would like to thank everyone who has donated so far and those who later this month will help to preserve this beloved structure."

For more information, contact Amanda Hertl at 313-396-6872 or [hertla@michigan.gov](mailto:hertla@michigan.gov) or [Katy Wyerman](mailto:Katy Wyerman) (Belle Isle Conservancy), 313-331-7760 or [wyermark@belleisleconservancy.org](mailto:wyermark@belleisleconservancy.org). Those that want to learn more can also visit [www.belleisleconservancy.org/savethenewsboy](http://www.belleisleconservancy.org/savethenewsboy).

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### **About Belle Isle**

Belle Isle Park, a 982-acre island park located in the Detroit River near downtown Detroit, is rich with natural beauty and historical and cultural resources. The park is home to the Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory, the Belle Isle Aquarium, a golf course, the James Scott Memorial Fountain and many more attractions popular with all ages and interests. The park offers a variety of outdoor activities, including hiking, bicycling, kayaking and picnicking. Learn more at [www.belleislepark.org](http://www.belleislepark.org).

### **About the Belle Isle Conservancy**

The Belle Isle Conservancy's mission is to protect, preserve, restore and enhance the natural environment, historic structures and unique character of Belle Isle as a public park for the enjoyment of all – now and forever. In 2014, historic Belle Isle joined Michigan's expansive, award-winning park system as Michigan's 102nd state park. The Belle Isle Conservancy is responsible for generating substantial funds for improvement projects and cultural programs throughout the island. For more information, visit [www.belleisleconservancy.org](http://www.belleisleconservancy.org).