

MID-ATLANTIC CENTER *for the* ARTS



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MAJOR GRANT ALLOWS LAUNCH OF WORLD WAR II TOWER PROJECT

A partnership between Lower Township and the Mid-Atlantic Center for the Arts (MAC) has produced a major advance in the efforts to restore the World War II coastal artillery lookout tower on Sunset Boulevard (Fire Control Tower No. 23).

In January, the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs awarded a \$400,000 Innovative Development grant to Lower Township, where the historic tower is located. Lower Township, in turn, will pass this funding on to MAC, which has a long-term lease to restore the tower and operate it as a World War II museum from the New Jersey Division of Parks and Forestry/DEP. When combined with two other grants – a \$600,000 grant from the New Jersey Historic Trust/DCA and a \$320,400 Phase I grant from the Casino Reinvestment Development Authority – this latest grant will provide MAC with the \$1,320,400 needed to open the tower to the public.

Fire Control Tower No. 23 was built in 1942 as one of 15 concrete coastal artillery lookout towers (four in New Jersey, 11 in Delaware) that were erected to aim the batteries of guns on both sides of Delaware Bay. Starting in 1940, these fortifications were part of a massive nationwide effort to protect all of our harbors from enemy invasion. Fire Control Tower No. 23 is the only lookout tower on the New Jersey side to survive intact (the ones in North Wildwood and Wildwood Crest were torn down, while the one in Cape May is enclosed by the Grand Hotel). MAC has undertaken the restoration of Fire Control Tower No. 23 to help tell the important story of the role of the Jersey Cape during World War II.

MAC's Director Michael Zuckerman credits many partners for making possible the success of this Innovative Development grant: Lower Township officials, especially Mayor Walt Craig and Deputy Mayor Bob Nolan; the South Jersey Economic Development District, whose Chairman, Freeholder Leonard Desiderio, made this project a priority, and whose Executive Director, Gordon Dahl, actually wrote the grant and negotiated with state and local officials; Commissioner Susan Bass Levin and her staff at the Department of Community Affairs; and Assemblyman Jeff Van Drew and former CRDA Executive Director Curtis Bashaw, who lobbied energetically for this project.

The Mid-Atlantic Center for the Arts (MAC) is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation and interpretation of Cape May's heritage. MAC also fosters the performing arts. MAC membership is open to all. For information about MAC's year-round schedule of tours, festivals, and special events, call 609-884-5404, 800-275-4278 or visit MAC's web site at www.capemaymac.org.

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