



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Owen H. Johnson

"Topping Out" Ceremony for Fresnel Lens Building at Fire Island Lighthouse

OWEN H. JOHNSON October 8, 2010



The Fire Island Lighthouse Preservation Society, Inc. and the National Park Service hosted a “Topping Out” Ceremony at the Fire Island Lighthouse on September 20, 2010 to commemorate the completion of the new Fresnel Lens Building’s steel framework.

In 2006, Senator Owen H. Johnson secured a \$400,000 State Grant for the construction of the new Fresnel Lens Building. Upon completion it will house the original 1858 First Order Fresnel Lens so that it can be displayed as a historic artifact and maritime educational aid. The fragile lens must be displayed in an area that is protected from environmental conditions and be secured from vandalism. The First Order Fresnel Lens was removed from the Fire Island Lighthouse in 1933 and then displayed in the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia where it is now in storage.

“To bring home the original Fresnel lens that was once atop the Fire Island Lighthouse is a very exciting project,” Senator Owen H. Johnson said. “I am pleased that I was able to secure a grant to aid in the preservation of Long Island’s rich nautical history and I look forward to seeing the project complete.”

A French physicist named Augustin Fresnel designed this innovative lens system in 1822 that would forever revolutionize the history of nautical navigation. By bending light beams through a Fresnel Lens,

all of the light source was pointed in the same direction to create a very intense, focused and unified light beam that could be seen more than 20 miles out to sea using just a 1,000-watt light bulb.

Senator Johnson's grant represents a portion of the total project cost. The Fire Island Lighthouse Preservation Society is currently embarking on a fundraising campaign to raise the additional funding necessary to complete the project.

To help support the project with donations, contact Fire Island Lighthouse Preservation Society, 4640 Captree Island, Captree, NY 11702 (631-321-7028) www.fireislandlighthouse.com.

Photo left to right: Ken Herman, long time member of the Fire Island Lighthouse Preservation Society and the Fresnel Lens Building Project Manager; Senator Owen H. Johnson; Chris Soller, Superintendent, Fire Island National Seashore; and Thomas F. Roberts III, longtime President of the Fire Island Lighthouse Preservation Society.