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CONTRACT AWARDED TO RESTORE EDISON MEMORIAL TOWER; PROJECT HONORS FAMED NEW JERSEY INVENTOR

TRENTON - Through a joint effort, a \$2.4 million contract has been awarded for the long-awaited restoration of Edison Memorial Tower, a historic structure at Edison State Park in Middlesex County honoring the work of inventor Thomas Alva Edison, DEP Commissioner Bob Martin and Edison Memorial Tower Corporation President Nancy Zerbe announced today.

The restoration contract was awarded to Astral Construction Services of Bergenfield. Work is to start in the near future to repair the Art Deco monument that dates to 1937. The tower has been closed to the public for several years because of crumbling concrete that made the structure hazardous.

"This is a terrific collaborative effort to restore an important piece of the State's history, and to honor one of its great residents – Thomas Alva Edison," said Commissioner Martin. "It is part of our continuing effort to protect the State's existing natural and historic resources, an effort that is a priority for the Christie Administration. We are delighted to see this restoration work finally begin."

Funding for the project includes \$1.5 million in Corporate Business Tax funds and State capital appropriation dollars provided by the DEP, plus \$875,000 in total that has been committed by the Middlesex County Open Space, Recreation, Farmland and Historic Preservation Trust Fund, and the Edison Memorial Tower Corporation, a nonprofit group dedicated to preserving the history of one of the nation's greatest inventors.

"The Edison Memorial Tower Corporation appreciates the community's ongoing support for this restoration project," said Zerbe. "We hope the public will join us this summer to watch the scaffolding go up and the work get under way."

The Edison Memorial Tower is located within the 36-acre Edison State Park, jointly administered by the DEP, Edison Township, and the Edison Memorial Tower Corporation. The park's historic elements, known collectively as the Thomas Edison Center at Menlo Park, include the Memorial Tower, several smaller commemorative monuments, a museum devoted to Thomas Edison, and the foundations of some of Edison's original laboratory buildings.

The Memorial Tower, listed on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places, was built in 1937-1938 at the site of Edison's Menlo Park laboratory, where the inventor established the world's first organized research and development laboratory, perfected the incandescent lamp, developed a complete system for generating and distributing electric current, and invented the phonograph.

Constructed six years after Edison's death, the Memorial Tower honors both Edison and his accomplishments at Menlo Park. In addition, the tower serves as the symbol for Edison Township, which adopted that name in 1954 to honor its most famous resident.

"Edison Township is pleased that the Edison Memorial Tower, which honors our most notable resident, Thomas Alva Edison, is being restored to its original beauty," said Edison Mayor Antonia Ricigliano.

In addition to making the structure safer, work to be done on the Memorial Tower includes cleaning and restoring the exposed aggregate concrete; restoration of lighting, including the large Pyrex glass

light bulb at the top of the Tower; replacement of the speaker system; restoration of the bronze door and plaques around the perimeter of the tower base; restoration of the stone plaza surrounding the tower; and miscellaneous electrical, plumbing, and site drainage repairs.

Architectural management will be provided by Mills + Schnoering Architects, LLC of Princeton, New Jersey.

During the restoration work, the Edison Memorial Tower Corporation will hold a series of ceremonial and educational events, including "behind-the-scenes" talks with the design team and contractors. For more information on these events, contact EMTC President Nancy L. Zerbe at 732-906-5667 or nzerbe@menloparkmuseum.org

For more information on the Tower restoration effort and to see photographs of the Tower, visit:

<http://www.menloparkmuseum.org/tower-restoration>

For more information on the Thomas Edison Center at Menlo Park, visit:

<http://www.menloparkmuseum.org/>