

# Lighthouse News Line

## Lighthouse and Park Get \$575,000 in State Budget!

The efforts of volunteers to rebuild the Cape St. George Light were rewarded this week with several major appropriations in the state budget, which will make it possible to start reconstruction of the lighthouse this summer. Signed into law on May 24 by Governor Charlie Crist, the budget for the 2007-2008 fiscal year includes three appropriations that affect our lighthouse:

- \* The Small Matching Grant of \$50,000 from the Division of Historical Resources;
- \* A line item of \$350,000 for reconstruction of the lighthouse; and
- \* \$175,000 for the St. George Lighthouse Park.

Although the governor vetoed many items in the fiscally conservative budget, all three of our appropriations survived! Governor Crist kept his commitment to support Florida's lighthouses, which he recognizes as an important part of the maritime heritage of our state.

Special credit for all of the state funding goes to Representative Will Kendrick, who fought on our behalf to include the money first in the House budget and then in the final budget negotiated by the House and Senate Conference Committee. SGLA President Dennis Barnell and Secretary Terry Kemp visited with Rep. Kendrick in his Tallahassee office during the final stages of the budget discussions, and left him with a number of photographs of our volunteers cleaning bricks and rebuilding the lantern room. After the legislature presented the budget to the governor for his signature, Rep. Kendrick met with members of the governor's staff to urge continued support for our funding. The governor's aides were impressed with our efforts and asked to share our photographs with their boss. Rep. Kendrick said that this evidence of SGLA's commitment to the lighthouse was the key factor that convinced Governor Crist to include funding for our efforts -- including the unanticipated money for the park -- in the budget!

The funds become available after the start of the state's new fiscal year in July. After allowing some time for preparation of the required agreements between SGLA and the state, Dennis said that we should look forward to breaking ground for the lighthouse in mid-August!