

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Popular west Michigan weather buoy seeks local support to return

Ann Arbor, Mich. – After another successful season, the Holland/Grand Haven area weather buoy was retrieved recently from Lake Michigan. The device needs local support to be redeployed in 2016. The Great Lakes Observing System (GLOS) and LimnoTech are hosting an information session and local support campaign kick-off event on Monday, Dec. 7, at the Boatwerks restaurant in Holland.

Thanks to a federal grant to the GLOS and LimnoTech, an environmental engineering company located in Ann Arbor, Mich, the buoy has provided forecasters, search and rescue crews, local boaters, anglers and others with real-time access to wind and wave conditions on Lake Michigan for the past three seasons. However, the limited term grant funds are running out.

“These nearshore buoys have proved to be a powerful resource for coastal communities across the Great Lakes,” says LimnoTech Project Engineer Ed Verhamme. “In 2015 the buoy deployed off of Port Sheldon received over 800,000 requests for observations, including nearly 100,000 views of the popular webcam feature.”

The buoy is part of a unique public-private partnership to deploy weather buoys closer to shore to improve local weather forecasts and alert boaters and swimmers of hazardous conditions. Similar buoys are located near South Haven and St. Joseph and receive broad community support to keep them deployed locally.

The informal event begins at 4 p.m. with a presentation about the buoy at 4:30 p.m at Boatwerks restaurant in Holland (216 Van Raalte Ave). Organizations and individuals interested in learning more about the buoy project should attend the session. No RSVP is necessary, but please email Ed Verhamme at everhamme@limno.com or call 734-681-0577 if you’d like more information about the project or the event.

Kelli Paige, executive director of the Great Lakes Observing System, explained that project supporters and sponsors were successful in applying for a federal grant in 2012 from the Coastal Storms Program of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to fund acquisition and deployment of the buoy for the 2013 to 2015 seasons. The original reason the grant was funded by NOAA was to support local weather forecasters who issue marine forecasts and weather warnings for the region.

“We have worked very hard to bring this technology to the west Michigan region and data from the station is used on a daily basis throughout the summer by boaters and public safety

personnel.” she said. “Now that grant support is running out, we are looking for other ways to support the continued operation and maintenance of this station to benefit the local community,”

Buoy observations are transmitted over the internet every 10 minutes and can be accessed freely through the Great Lakes Buoys website at <http://greatlakesbuoys.org>.

As part of a public-private partnership, LimnoTech is working closely with GLOS to lead a fundraising campaign to support annual buoy maintenance and seasonal deployment and retrieval. GLOS is a 501c(3) organization based in Ann Arbor that supports a range of observing system projects across the Great Lakes.

If individuals would like to make a contribution now to GLOS to support buoy observations in west Michigan, a YouCaring website has been set up at <https://www.youcaring.com/great-lakes-observing-system-475212>. All financial contributions to support the buoy will be managed by the Great Lakes Observing System and are tax deductible.

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The Great Lakes Observing System is a network of people and technology coordinated to provide data about the Great Lakes at no cost to users and in a variety of formats and applications. This information informs policy, public health and safety, resource management and research activities. For more information on our work visit www.glos.us. Connect with us on our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/GreatLakesObservingSystem, and follow our tweets at www.twitter.com/GLOSystem

