

**News Release**  
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## **Charlevoix County Partners With Networks Northwest to Purchase Historic Lighthouse Property**

BEAVER ISLAND, MI – An historic northern Michigan lighthouse has new owners. Charlevoix County has partnered with Networks Northwest to purchase the Beaver Island Lighthouse School property from Charlevoix Public Schools. The property had been used by Northwest Michigan Works!, a program of Networks Northwest, as an alternative education site for more than twenty-five years. That program was suspended in 2016 due to changes in federal regulations and funding.

The purchase price of the 171 acre property was \$215-thousand, with Charlevoix County owning 51 percent and Networks Northwest 49 percent. The property includes the lighthouse and fog signal building, three residential cabins, a classroom building, a dining hall, and a wood shop. The County and Networks Northwest plan to work in conjunction with the Beaver Island Historical Society and island residents to identify potential future uses of the site that will increase the presence of the historical asset and surrounding property.

“Charlevoix Public Schools is pleased that the sale will likely mean preservation of this historic property,” said Mike Ritter, Charlevoix Public Schools Superintendent. “The property served an important purpose for many years as part of our school district, and it’s great to know that it will remain in the hands of the public for generations to come.”

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“Given the historical nature of the Beaver Head Lighthouse Property, its value as a regional recreational asset, and cultural significance the property holds to the residents of this county, we are very proud of this joint venture with Networks Northwest,” said Kevin Shepard, Charlevoix County Administrator.

The Beaver Island Lighthouse, sometimes referred to as the Beaver Head Light Station, is one of the oldest lighthouses on the Great Lakes and is listed as a significant site in the National Register of Historic Places. It was built in the 1850s and was decommissioned in 1962 when it was replaced by a radio beacon. Charlevoix Public Schools acquired the property from the U.S. Coast Guard in 1975 with an obligation to utilize the property for educational purposes, which was achieved by working closely with Northwest Michigan Works! and Networks Northwest over the past twenty-five years.

“The partnership between Charlevoix County and Networks Northwest is now in place to restore the lighthouse and create a framework for all those who are in any way connected to the property including island residents to explore long-term, sustainable ways for the Beaver Island property to be a dynamic public asset moving forward,” said Matt McCauley, CEO of Networks Northwest.

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NOTE to Media: Images are oftentimes available upon request by e-mailing Dan Boss at [dan.boss@networksnorthwest.org](mailto:dan.boss@networksnorthwest.org) and stating preferences for resolution (300 dpi?), file format (.tif? .jpg?) and file size (1MB or less?). Or, phone (231) 929-5047. Check our online Media Room at: [networksnorthwest.org/media](http://networksnorthwest.org/media)

Founded in 1974, Networks Northwest facilitates and manages various programs and services for the 10 county region. These programs include Northwest Michigan Works, Small Business Development Center, Procurement Technical Assistance Center, various business services, and many different regional planning initiatives in response to our communities’ requests and needs. You will see the broad spectrum of workforce, business and community services Networks Northwest offers if you visit our website, [networksnorthwest.org](http://networksnorthwest.org). Networks Northwest’s member counties are: Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Manistee, Missaukee, and Wexford.