

SOUTH HAVEN

New fish-cleaning station planned

Grant to help pay for station; July opening eyed

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For The Herald-Palladium

SOUTH HAVEN — If all goes as planned, anglers who come to South Haven this summer to fish will be able to clean their catch at a new fish-cleaning station.

The city is the recipient of a \$150,000 grant from the Great Lakes Fishery Trust to help pay for construction of a \$300,000 ADA accessible fish-cleaning station at Black River Park. The city will provide the \$150,000 match from its marina and Black River Park funds, whose revenues come from fees paid by users of the

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city's marinas, boat launch and parking services. No general fund money will be spent on it.

The new station will replace the current one, which is more than 20 years old. City officials have said the station's equipment is outdated, and that the station itself is not large enough to deal with the number of anglers who would like to use it.

"The grinder on the existing fish cleaning station is a glorified food processor that is in regular need of

maintenance," said Carolyn Smeltzer, a business development assistant at Abonmarche, who wrote the grant application for a new station. "The city received feedback from numerous anglers that the existing facility is inadequate in size to support demand, and they frequently have to wait for long periods to use the site, or give up and leave. The fishing population has desired a larger facility for several years."

Now that the city has been awarded the grant, plans will soon move forward for construction of a station with eight cleaning tables, including an ACA

accessible table; a cooler washing station; commercial sprayers; draining racks, internal LED lighting for evening use; and cutting boards. In addition, vending machines with ice and bait will be available at the new station. Signage will also be placed near the station to regarding the best methods to clean fish and the common fish species found in surrounding waters. The city hopes the station will be ready for use by the end of July.

The new station will be built next to the new universally accessible fishing pier at Black River Park.

The current cleaning station is located in the section of the park where people have to pay to park in order to access the public boat launch. However, the new station can be accessed from a no-fee parking area. Use of the station will also be free of charge.

The new station is part of more than \$500,000 worth of improvements that have occurred at Black River Park over the past several years. Those improvements include the universally accessible fishing pier, renovated restrooms and shower stalls; parking lot improvements, a new access drive and new skid piers.