

# Preserving history: Groups look to save WWII towers

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Along the Delaware coast stands a series of watchtowers which helped protect the United States during World War II. They were used to look for enemy ships and, if any had been spotted, the crews within the towers would have alerted the Army at Fort Miles to defend the shore.

With World War II over for 70 years now, the towers lining the shore are no longer used for defensive purposes and now stand as a monument to the times.

Due in part to joint efforts between the Delaware Seashore Preservation Foundation, Fort Miles Historical Association and Delaware State Parks, three of these towers are going to be restored.

"We want to restore the



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Tower 3, the World War II tower located on Tower Road in Dewey Beach, already features a beach house with a public restroom, as well as parking. The World War II towers were used to look for enemy ships attempting to attack the United States.

towers internally and externally so that people can enjoy the history of the towers and see the vistas from the top," said Ernie Felici, chairman of the Delaware Seashore Preservation Foundation.

The three towers that

have been chosen are all located on the Route 1 corridor. Tower 1 is located in Fenwick Island, Tower 2 is located in Bethany and Tower 3 is located just south of Dewey Beach.

"Right now, we are fo-

cusing on Tower 3," Felici said. "We want to be able to open it to the general public. The location is perfect."

Tower 3 already features a beach house with a public restroom as well as parking.

"Our overall goal, however, is to open the area to weddings and events, like with the Indian River Life Saving Station," Felici said. "But right now we are just focused on the restoration. Once that is finished then we will fo-

cus on the other activities."

In order to open Tower 3 to the general public, Felici said there needs to be some costly work done.

"The major cost is the stairway system and the internal parts of the tower," Felici said. "We need to secure the stairway for the weather."

Felici also added the engineering costs to restore the tower will be the most expensive and the reconstruction of the concrete on the outside is a relatively minor repair.

However, the three vested organizations have been making progress to save the tower.

"We have done a preliminary engineering study and we had positive results," Felici said. "Right now, they are doing a drainage study because, through the years,

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sand has accumulated at the base.”

Currently, funds and grants are being sought to aid in the restoration of the towers, an effort, Felici said, that is going well.

The towers have had one large benefactor assisting with the costs for the past two years.

To aid in the reconstruction of these towers, Delaware Coastal Preservation Foundation has been named a beneficiary of the Coastal Delaware Running Festival, a Boston Marathon qualifying run which has been held the past two Aprils and will be held once again next April.

The three towers are a part of the Fort Miles Historical Association. Felici said he hopes by restoring interest in the tower, there will be a renewed history in Fort Miles at Cape Henlopen State Park as well as the history of the coastal Delaware region during World War II.

For more information, Felici encourages people to visit [dspf.net](http://dspf.net) or [savethetower.org](http://savethetower.org).

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An old WWII watchtower on Tower Road in Dewey Beach is one of three located on the Route 1 corridor targeted for restoration.

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