

Grassroots Groups Raise Money To Help Rebuild Huntington Pier

By Greg Hernandez

12.17. Independent 6-29-89
Just as every set of waves batters what's left of the Huntington Beach Municipal Pier, grassroots groups continue to chip away at the monolithic sum required to rebuild the city's most visible landmark.

The Persons Interested in Ex-

pediating Reconstruction (PIER) made a dent in the \$10 million price tag with a \$12,000 check presented to the City Council Monday night.

The amount represents the sale of pier memorabilia sold on weekends at the waterfront since the pier was officially shut down last summer.

The 1,820-foot pier was declared unsafe and closed to the public July 12 as the ocean's constant pounding deteriorated problem areas damaged from a violent storm in January 1988.

The City Council immediately voted to rebuild the structure and fundraising efforts have been under way since.

The PIER group's efforts are spearheaded by Tom Bagshaw and Julie Kotsch, former employees of The End Cafe, a restaurant at the end of the pier which was washed out to sea in the brutal winter tempest.

PIER plans to continue their quest by selling a 15-month calendar complete with photos of the pier and surrounding areas.

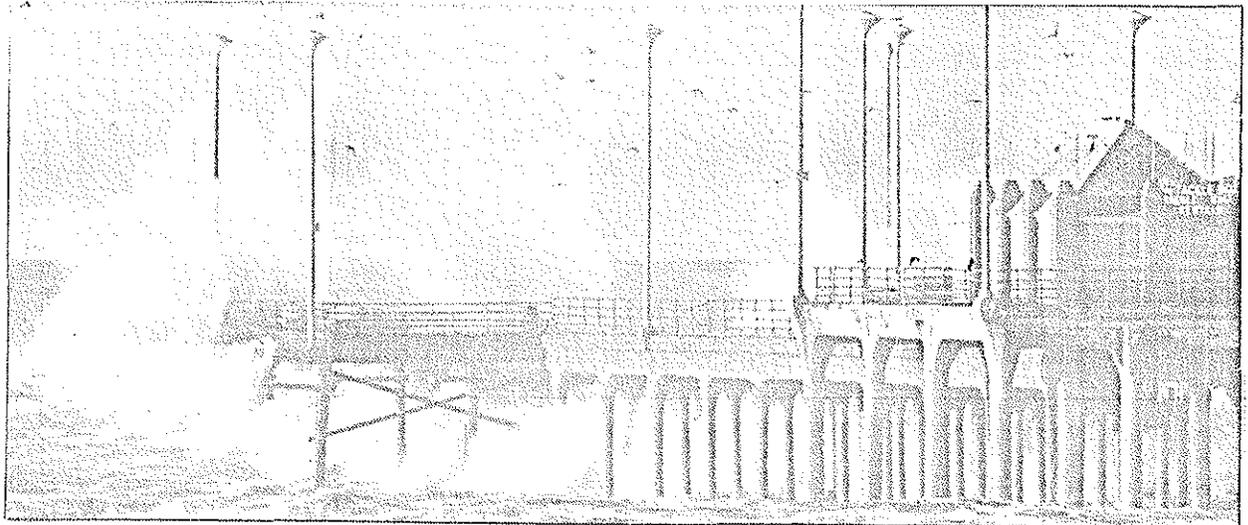
To show their support for the group's efforts, the City Council agreed to appropriate \$11,972 in seed money to fund the design and printing of 3,500 calendars.

Bagshaw said the group hopes to raise \$16,000 by selling the calendars, which are scheduled to go on sale in August and will sell for \$8 each.

One week prior to Monday's presentation, the council received a check for more than \$13,000 from senior citizens who raised the money through their annual Senior King and Queen of Huntington Beach contest.

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Independent File Photo

WINTER TEMPEST — A savage storm in January 1988 wiped away the end of the HB Pier.

HB Pier...

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At the same council meeting, eight local schools presented a total of \$5,723 to the fund, which they earned through various fundraisers at their respective schools.

"These community groups are making the job of pier funding very pleasant. Their dedication is energizing the community at large," said Ron Shenkman, chairman of the Pier Fundraising Committee, a group appointed by council last summer.

While the efforts of the local groups are adding up, the bulk of the money for reconstruction will come from the state and federal levels and from fundraisers organized by the Pier Special Events Group, an arm of the fundraising committee.

The special events committee netted approximately \$15,000

when they held a 5K and 10K run earlier this month. The event drew 1,600 runners.

The special events committee is now making a push to sell \$25 grant deeds that symbolize owning one-square-foot of the pier.

The fundraising committee is also in the process of kicking off a new campaign in search of major contributions from the corporate world.

"We're coordinating a drive for major donors made up of corporations, builders and developers — people who have a vested interest in seeing that the pier gets rebuilt," Shenkman said.

The city is doing its part by raising parking fees on the City Beach from \$4 to \$5.

The \$1 surcharge was approved by the council in April and is expected to bring in a minimum of \$500,000 in funds earmarked to rebuild the pier over the next two years.

The city has also promised

another \$1.6 million for the project from the general fund.

State and federal aid is on the way as well.

Supervisor Harriet Wieder has obtained \$250,000 from the county's Harbor, Beaches and Parks Department and is pursuing an additional \$500,000 from the same source.

A bill being considered by the state assembly providing assistance for all piers in California could mean as much as \$3 million for the Huntington Beach structure if passed, according to Shenkman.

A state senate bill sponsored by Sen. John Seymour is currently in committee and could mean an additional \$2 million.

On the federal level, as much as \$2.5 million could come from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and \$500,000 from the Office of Emergency Services.

Private donations are nearing the \$200,000 mark.

For more information on PIER group, call 536-9326.