

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **FPTower Inc. Begins a New Chapter Following Ownership Transition of Frying Pan Shoals Light Tower**



**WILMINGTON, N.C.** — FPTower Inc., the nonprofit organization dedicated to maritime safety, science and environmental stewardship, today announced that it has entered into an agreement transferring its ownership interests associated with the Frying Pan Shoals Light Tower to private ownership.

As this agreement concludes the nonprofit's direct relationship with the offshore structure, it marks the beginning of a new chapter for FPTower Inc. as the organization brings its mission closer to shore, serving coastal communities throughout North and South Carolina.

FPTower Inc. helped transform the Frying Pan Shoals Light Tower into far more than a historic structure. Through the dedication of thousands of volunteers, donors, sponsors, researchers, educators, and supporters, the Tower became a nationally recognized platform for historic preservation, maritime safety, scientific research, environmental education, and public engagement.

Over the past several years, FPTower Inc. coordinated complex offshore restoration projects in one of the most challenging marine environments on the East Coast. Volunteers rebuilt walkways, repaired abundant drinking water, stabilized structural components, installed new electrical infrastructure, created microwave communications systems, enhanced emergency preparedness, and expanded renewable energy initiatives to support long-term sustainability.

Beyond restoration, the Tower became an important location for scientific collaboration and educational outreach. Partnerships with researchers, educators, environmental organizations, and technology providers helped advance marine science, weather observation, environmental monitoring, and public education. These collaborations demonstrated how a historic offshore structure could serve as a living laboratory while inspiring greater appreciation for the Atlantic Ocean and North Carolina's coastal environment.

Maritime safety has remained at the heart of the organization's mission.

Most recently, FPTower Inc. distributed U Safe remote-controlled rescue lifebuoys to coastal communities through its 2026 Save A Life Raffle. The initiative expanded access to innovative water rescue technology while promoting public awareness of drowning prevention and emergency response. Earlier deployments of the U Safe system at Frying Pan Shoals Light Tower also demonstrated the practical value of this technology during real-world rescue operations.

"As we focus near-shore, our mission continues," said Richard Neal, Chair of the Board and Executive Director of FPTower Inc. "The tower helped create the mission, but the mission has now grown well beyond the tower. The practical safety skills we gained while restoring, operating, and protecting one of America's most unique offshore landmarks has prepared us for our next chapter. We are bringing that mission closer to shore to benefit coastal communities throughout the Carolinas through maritime safety, marine science and research, and educational programming."

Although the nonprofit will no longer manage activities at the Frying Pan Shoals Light Tower, the expertise developed through years of safe offshore operations remains one of FPTower Inc.'s greatest assets. Coordinating restoration efforts 32 miles offshore required innovative problem-solving, volunteer leadership, logistical planning, environmental stewardship, and collaboration among public and private partners. Those experiences now position the organization to develop new initiatives that will benefit communities and help save lives throughout the region.

FPTower Inc. will continue building upon the same principles that guided its work at Frying Pan Shoals Light Tower—protecting lives on the water, supporting scientific discovery, promoting environmental stewardship, and educating future generations about the importance of healthy marine ecosystems.

Future initiatives will emphasize strategic partnerships with coastal communities, educational institutions, emergency responders, environmental organizations, and public agencies to expand programs that support maritime safety, marine science, conservation, and STEM education.

"Our supporters made everything we accomplished possible," Neal added. "Every donor, volunteer, sponsor, researcher, educator, and visitor became part of something much larger than restoring a historic structure. Together, we demonstrated what passionate people can accomplish when they unite behind a common mission. That legacy will continue to inspire everything we do moving forward."

FPTower Inc. expressed its sincere appreciation to the thousands of individuals and organizations whose generosity, expertise, and volunteer service helped preserve the Frying Pan Shoals Light Tower while advancing public education, scientific research, and maritime safety.

While the nonprofit's relationship with the physical structure has ended, its commitment to serving the public remains unwavering.

The Tower helped launch the mission.

The mission now continues beyond the Tower.

### **About FPTower Inc.**

FPTower Inc. is a North Carolina nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing maritime safety, marine science and research, environmental education, and public engagement. Building upon years of experience coordinating complex offshore restoration and scientific initiatives, the organization develops partnerships and programs that strengthen coastal communities and inspire future generations to protect and appreciate our oceans.

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