

# 2014 GOVERNOR'S HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARDS

## Mount Diablo Historic Beacon Restoration



*The Mount Diablo Beacon shines every December 7<sup>th</sup>  
in honor of those who served at Pearl Harbor.*

The Mount Diablo Beacon, which sits on the peak of Mount Diablo in Mount Diablo State Park, is one of the last remaining working beacons from the transcontinental string of guides that were installed in the 1920s to assist with commercial aviation. Each year since 1964, it is lit on Pearl Harbor Day to remember those who lost their lives at Pearl Harbor and to honor the men and women who serve our country in the armed forces. Over the years the beacon had fallen into significant disrepair. Save Mount Diablo, with their partners, undertook the restoration so the historic beacon would shine on for generations to come.

On April 15, 1928, the "Standard Diablo" tower was dedicated and initially lit by Charles Lindbergh, remotely, from a ceremony that physically took place in Denver, Colorado. Standard Oil of California supplied the beacon in 1928 as one of five beacons along the west coast. Initially it was placed on a 70-foot steel tower. On April 5, 1941 it was moved to the newly constructed Summit Museum where it sits to this day. The beacon shined from the summit of Mount Diablo each night until December 8, 1941, the day after the attack on Pearl Harbor. It was not relit until December 7, 1964. Since that day, the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association, the Sons and Daughters of Pearl Harbor Survivors, Mount Diablo State Park, and the non-profit Save Mount Diablo light the beacon each December 7 in memory of those who served and sacrificed at Pearl Harbor. By 2010, however, the disrepair of the beacon made it doubtful that the tradition would continue.

Save Mount Diablo assembled a team of experts and began to develop a plan on how to restore the Beacon and raise the needed \$100,00 to carry out the plan. They did numerous presentations and community outreach efforts. Donations came in from small and large businesses and over 450 individuals. The last \$10,000 came from Chevron, formerly Standard Oil, helping to bring the total amount raised to \$118,491. Assembly member Joan Buchanan wrote AB1916 authorizing the Department of Parks and Recreation to enter into an operating agreement with Save Mount Diablo, and authorizing the use of highly skilled volunteers and professionals. To ensure the historic accuracy of all work, Save Mount Diablo hired a conservator with expertise in the preservation and conservation of historic structures. The first two years of the project entailed detailed research, right down to what paint color and type was originally used on the beacon. Shell Oil of Martinez and Maxim Crane provided the crane and crew to lift the Beacon safely off, and later back onto, the Summit Museum roof.

Thanks to the countless hours of dedicated volunteers, the help of many businesses, organizations, and the community, the restored Mount Diablo Beacon was placed back atop the Summit Museum in October 2013, and was relit on December 7<sup>th</sup> of that year, during a ceremony attended by local Pearl Harbor survivors and community members.

Learn more about the Mt. Diablo Beacon restoration, and lighting ceremony:

[http://www.savemountdiablo.org/activities\\_events\\_beacon.html](http://www.savemountdiablo.org/activities_events_beacon.html)