

## A light touch! Incredible time-lapse video captures the lighting of the 555-foot-high Washington Monument

By Daily Mail Reporter and Associated Press

PUBLISHED: 14:57 EST, 13 July 2013 | UPDATED: 07:18 EST, 14 July 2013

While the Washington Monument is closed for earthquake damage repairs over the next year, 488 lamps will restore the marble tower's glow each night on the National Mall.

As the spectacular sight is being constantly captured by EarthCam's webcams, the company has also created a striking time-lapse video of the lighting of 555-foot-high national landmark.

The striking footage shows the scaffolding climbing the obelisk from top to bottom, erected by workers with a head for heights.

The video culminates with the switch being flipped on the new lights and the monument being illuminated in its full glory for the first time.

The National Park Service lit up the monument for the first time on Monday evening - and will continue to do so each night at dusk.



National Park Service Director Jonathan Jarvis and philanthropist David Rubenstein, who donated \$7.5 million to fund half the cost of repairs, took part in the first lighting.

A blue, semi-transparent fabric has been wrapped around the scaffolding that surrounds the monument as it undergoes extensive repairs of its 2011 earthquake damage.

Architect Michael Graves was commissioned to design a scrim to decorate the monument between 1998 and 2000, when it was last restored.

His same design was used this time to exaggerate the scale of the monument's stone pattern and the mortar that is being repaired.

National Mall Superintendent Bob Vogel told The Associated Press that the lighting marks a milestone in the years-long effort to restore and reopen the monument to President George Washington.

'We know that our visitors are disappointed that they can't actually go up in the monument,' he said. 'So, we hope that this will make up for it just a little.'

It takes several minutes for all 488 lights to come to full power, Vogel said. After the first lighting, sensors will light the monument automatically each night at dusk.

Many stones near the top of the monument were chipped or cracked, and mortar was shaken loose during a 5.8-magnitude earthquake that struck Aug. 23, 2011, along the East Coast.

Experts have completed a detailed analysis of each stone's damage.

Now, they are working to ensure that all the repair plans are just right, from the color of mortar to a process for injecting a sealant into cracked stones, Vogel said.

Within days, they will begin making final repairs, working stone by stone across the surface and inside the obelisk.

The monument is expected to reopen once the repairs are completed in spring 2014, the park service has estimated.

In the meantime, the National Park Service is launching a live online EarthCam view of the monument and of the National Mall.

The monument lighting also marks Rubenstein's role in a larger campaign to restore neglected sites on the National Mall, officials said.

The co-founder of the Carlyle Group investment firm has joined the nonprofit Trust for the National Mall as a co-chairman to help raise \$350 million to preserve and restore sites in the nation's most-visited national park.

'He's taking his leadership role as a co-chair of the campaign for the National Mall very seriously,' said Caroline Cunningham, the fundraising group's president.

'We're really grateful for not only his passion about the restoration of the Washington Monument but his passion for the campaign to restore the National Mall.'