Nearly 200 years after its construction, the Erie Canal remains an iconic symbol of American ingenuity and determination. When first proposed, however, a manmade waterway connecting the Atlantic Ocean with the Great Lakes was met with a healthy dose of skepticism. Undeterred, the canal’s founders were driven by a bold vision of what the canal could achieve for the people of New York State and young nation. And so they pressed on—forging partnerships with businesses, communities and others who recognized the Erie Canal’s potential, until at last they transformed dreams into reality.

Today, this sense of purpose and shared commitment continues. Across the 524-mile long Corridor, we honor our distinct heritage while reimagining and revitalizing this landmark waterway and the role it plays in our communities. By leveraging resources, sharing ideas and joining forces with those who share our vision of preserving the canal’s legacy while growing its potential, the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor is once again harnessing the power of partnership—and together, we are creating an exciting future.
Erie Canalway’s popular Ticket to Ride program continued to expand in 2015, providing first rate field trips to canal sites and museums for more than 7,500 students and reaching 18,500 children over the life of the program. Ticket to Ride covers transportation and program fees so that fourth graders in public and private schools, as well as homeschooled families, can see the canal first hand.

With increased resources, strategic partnerships, and staff attendance at educational conferences across the state, we doubled the number of participating school districts from 35 to 70 and continued to build “buzz” about the program among teachers and administrators.

The Erie Canal’s powerful lessons of innovation and perseverance come alive for students through hands-on learning at ten historic sites. The experience complements classroom curriculum about the Erie Canal and reinforces both the New York State Social Studies Curriculum and STEM (Science Technology Engineering Math) requirements.

For example, children explore the engineering challenges that spurred the Flight of Five Locks at the Erie Canal Discovery in Lockport, dig as “amateur archeologists” to catalogue found objects at Chittenango Landing Canal Boat Museum in Chittenango, practice their math skills at the Erie Canal Museum in Syracuse, and learn about how Pascal’s principles influence lock operation at miSci in Schenectady.

After the trip, the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor’s document based questions (DBQs), created in partnership with the Albany Institute of History and Art, reinforce lessons learned on the field trip.

Partnerships are the life blood of Ticket to Ride. Erie Canalway connects historic sites, museums, and schools, and works with funders to ensure ongoing program support. This year’s key program supporters included the National Park Service, National Park Foundation through the generous support of DISNEY, and M&T Bank Charitable Foundation (Capital Region), as well as in-kind program outreach from New York State United Teachers (NYSUT).
SYRACUSE TO HOST 2017 WORLD CANALS CONFERENCE

When hundreds of canal professionals, scholars and enthusiasts gather in Syracuse for the 2017 World Canals Conference, they’ll help celebrate an important milestone: the bicentennial of the construction of the Erie Canal in 1817. The event will focus attention on the transformative impacts of the Erie Canal and inland waterways worldwide—past, present, and future. Paper sessions, events, and tours will provide powerful opportunities to showcase exciting projects in central New York and across the Corridor. Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, NYS Canal Corporation and the Syracuse Convention and Visitors Bureau (Visit Syracuse) have joined forces to host the conference, and we will be sharing exciting developments in the coming months.

PARTNERING ON TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GRANTS (TAG)

Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor was pleased to partner with the Preservation League of New York State and the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) on the Preservation League’s signature Technical Assistance Grant program. This year, with support from Erie Canalway, the Preservation League awarded 17 Technical Assistance Grants of up to $3,000 each to municipalities, nonprofits and cultural institutions to carry out technical studies of historic buildings. Four of these projects will take place at sites located within the National Heritage Corridor. The Preservation League’s grant awards support technical studies carried out by preservation and design professionals. We are pleased to continue this partnership in 2016 by directing additional funds for TAG projects in the Corridor.

MAKING HISTORY MORE ACCESSIBLE: NYS ARCHIVES

Given the Empire State’s rich history, the New York State Archives houses a treasure trove of images that chronicle important events, including the construction and success of New York’s canals. Accessing these photos and documents used to require spending hours at the Archives, trolling through old files—until now. Through a grant by the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, more than 700 photos and historic documents are now available digitally. Finding them is now as easy as going to the New York State Archives website (http://www.archives.nysed.gov), clicking on “Digital Collections” and typing in “Erie Canal.” By fostering a greater understanding of history—especially among students and scholars—these images serve to build greater appreciation for our heritage and spark new opportunities along the corridor.
Did you know there are four national parks located within an hour’s drive of major cities along the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor? Five new itineraries, linking each of these sites (plus the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area) with nearby canal attractions, are now available to guide visitors to some of the best recreational, cultural and natural sites within the Corridor.

We created the itineraries as part of the National Park Service’s “Find Your Park” campaign, celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2016. Free to view or download at www.eriecanalway.org, they include:

- **Follow America’s Destiny:** Saratoga National Historical Park, Stillwater; Champlain Lock 5 and Hudson Crossing Park, Schuylerville
- **Discover Why All Roads Lead to Rome:** Fort Stanwix National Monument, Rome; Verona Beach State Park, Light House, and Sylvan Beach
- **Be Moved by Women and Water:** Women’s Rights National Historical Park, Seneca Falls; Cayuga-Seneca Locks 2 and 3, Seneca Falls
- **Go Where the Buffalonians Roam:** Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site, Buffalo; Canalside, Buffalo
- **Experience the Power of Water:** Niagara Falls National Heritage Area, Niagara Falls; Erie Canal Discovery Center, Lockport Flight and Locks 34, 35, Lockport

Each itinerary highlights “must see” sites, as well as dining options and potential side trips. And the “Get Active!” section provides suggestions for cycling, hiking, paddling and other outdoor opportunities to explore.

Promote the Corridor AS A WORLD CLASS TOURISM DESTINATION
There are a million ways to enjoy the 524 mile Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor—and each year, we help thousands of annual visitors plan a trip or discover something new. And by weaving together heritage, cultural and recreational highlights, we also reaffirm the vital role the Corridor continues to play—in our history and today.

**ERIE CANALWAY MAP & GUIDE**

With help of 85 visitor centers and cultural heritage sites, we distributed 60,000 copies of our visitor guide in 2015. The guide highlights new events and ways to enjoy the Corridor, and includes resources for boating and cycling, a full Corridor map, and places to explore.

**PHOTO CONTEST AND CALENDAR**

Our popular calendar tells a gorgeous story of the Corridor’s beauty and history—through the lens of our photo contest winners. In 2015, we distributed 17,500 calendars, with the help of more than 75 libraries and museums.

**NEW DOCKSIDE EXHIBITS PLANNED ALONG CANALS**

A new series of outdoor exhibits will be installed at more than 40 community access points along the New York State Canal System. The panels will help illustrate how canal towns developed, highlight their links to the canal system and heritage corridor, and connect visitors to nearby attractions and services.

The multi-side kiosks include a full panel map of New York State’s canal system. Most sites will also feature community orientation maps—with points of interest within walking distance of the canal. More than 20 locations will also feature community history panels based on 19th century “birdseye view” lithographs. Installation begins in the spring of 2016.

**EVENTS AND FESTIVALS**

In partnership with the NYS Canal Corporation, Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor sponsors statewide and community-based canal-related events each year. In 2015, we sponsored 26 events spanning the full Corridor.

From bike rides to kayaking, arts and harvest festivals, these community events play a key role in generating $380 million in annual economic impact, driven by canal-related tourism. More than 400 annual events take place along New York’s canals each year, attracting more than a half million people.

Sponsored events include:

- Low Bridge, High Water: A Canal Opening Celebration, Brockport
- Waterford Flight of Locks Centennial Observance, Waterford
- Fairport Canal Days Arts Festival, Fairport
- A Day along the River, Fort Hunter
- Canal Fest, 30 Years and Growing: Chittenango
- Music on the Erie Summer Series, Newark
- Community Concert Series, Macedon
- Summer Sunday Night Concerts at the Gazebo, Spencerport
- Journey Along the Erie Canal, Buffalo to Albany
- Cycle the Erie Canal, Buffalo to Albany
- Mabee Farm Canalfest, Schenectady
- Canalfest, Rome
- Tour the Towpath, Rome to DeWitt
- Town of DeWitt’s 47th Annual Canal Day, East Syracuse
- Canal Splash!, Entire Corridor
- Seneca Falls Centennial Celebration, Seneca Falls
- 11th Annual Cardboard Boat Race, Schuylerville
- Towpath Day, Camillus
- River Through Time, Fort Plain/Canajoharie
- Magic in Minetto, Minetto
- 28th Little Falls Canal Celebration, Little Falls
- Lockapalooza Whitewater Kayaking Festival, Pittsford
- Reach the Water—Adaptive Kayaking, Fairport
- Waterford Tugboat Roundup, Waterford
- Locktoberfest, Lockport
- Montezuma Aqueduct 5K RunWalk, Montezuma
Foster Vibrant Communities
CONNECTED BY THE WATERWAY

ERIE CANALWAY HERITAGE AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE

Created to honor significant places along the Corridor, the Erie Canalway Heritage Awards of Excellence recognize outstanding effort by a community or organization in advancing the goals of the Erie Canalway Preservation and Management Plan.

The 2015 winners include the Lockport Locks District in Lockport and Hudson Crossing Park in Schuylerville. The Old Erie Canal Towpath at Butternut Drive in DeWitt was awarded Honorable Mention.

In announcing the winners, Russ Andrews, Chair of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor Commission, explained, “These are not only great places to visit—they are outstanding models that show how preserving our heritage can go hand-in-hand with economic and community revitalization.”

The Lockport Locks District centers on the restoration of Locks 69 and 70, first completed in 1849. Canal Street, a pedestrian and bicycle-only street overlooking the locks, anchors dozens of businesses and attractions in this highly successful convergence of economic development, historic preservation and community revitalization.

Once abandoned land, the Hudson Crossing Park in Schuylerville is now a recreation and education destination—and testament to community involvement and municipal cooperation. Located at Lock C5 Island on the Champlain Canal and Hudson River, it includes a Riverwalk Sensory Trail for visitors with special needs, Green Ribbon School Program that teaches environmental responsibility, kayak launches, and trails.

Old Erie Canal Towpath at Butternut Drive in DeWitt is the starting point for the 36-mile Old Erie Canal State Historic Park. The park is a popular recreational destination for local residents and for visitors from around the world who come to cycle the towpath trail and see the Old Erie Canal. Since 2012, the Town of DeWitt has maintained a one-mile stretch of the park near Butternut Drive and has made continuous improvements in increasing access and enhancing the entrance to this important gateway to the Canalway Trail.

The Lure of Local Flavor

When it was first built, the Erie Canal not only transported crops and products from local farms, but it also carried ideas, spreading new ways of thinking and working. Today, that legacy continues with the Erie Canalway’s Downtown Investment Forums. Our third annual forum, held in Ithaca, focused on the potential for locally sourced food and spirits, together with historic lodging, to drive tourism and build more vibrant downtowns. The day-long event included conversations with experts and an exchange of best practices for marketing and product development, as well as strategies for attracting investment.
**2015 Grant Recipients**

**Capital Repertory Theatre, Albany:**
More than 5,000 students from 33 schools learned about the Erie Canal thanks to Capital Rep’s Backyard History Tour of their original play, *They Built America*.

**Herschell Carrousel Factory Museum, North Tonawanda:**
The museum developed a mobile version of its website to better engage users.

**National Women’s Hall of Fame, Seneca Falls:**
Grant funds are helping to rehabilitate the Seneca Knitting Mill which will become the home of the Center for Great Women’s exhibitions. The Hall of Fame attracts 10,000 visitors annually.

**Rochester Museum and Science Center, Rochester:**
The museum is creating an educator’s guide to better connect interpretive areas of the museum that relate to the Erie Canal story.

**Town of Clifton Park:**
The grant is enabling the town to design and install interpretive/wayfinding signs at the Vischer Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve.

**Village of Brockport:**
In Spring 2016, the Village will unveil a new mural in Sagawa Park that depicts important components of village history, including the Erie Canal.

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**WATER TRAIL MOVES FORWARD**

As kayaks, canoes and paddleboards gain popularity, the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor is responding with a new Erie Canal/Mohawk River Historic Water Trail, connecting communities along the waterway from Rome to Waterford. The 128-mile trail will make it easier for non-motorized boats to experience the canal and local attractions, by creating and connecting launch points along the way.

The trail will begin at Bellamy Harbor Park in Rome, and end where the Erie Canal and Mohawk River meet the Hudson River in Waterford. In that span, the Mohawk River and Erie Canal flow through deep valleys, over dramatic drops (now bypassed by locks), through woods, farmland, industrial cities and small towns. Plans also call for designating camp sites and highlighting the region’s rich heritage.

Spurred by a $15,000 matching grant from the National Park Service, Erie Canalway secured additional funding for the trail from the Rome Community Foundation, Community Foundation of Herkimer & Oneida Counties, Inc., Mohawk Valley Collective, Eric Mower + Associates, many individual donors and significant in-kind services from the NYS Canal Corporation. In addition, the NPS Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program will provide technical advice.

A trail plan and initial public awareness campaign will be completed by the fall of 2016.

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**PARTNERING TO PROMOTE THE CORRIDOR & ITS COMMUNITIES**

Each year, we are proud to support exciting new projects that further the mission of the Corridor. Partnering with proven organizations, who offer unique assets and expertise, we focus our small grants on new opportunities to spur learning about New York’s canals or attract more visitors to explore the Corridor. In 2015, we awarded six new grants for a total of $30,000. This funding was leveraged by an additional $320,117 in private and public project funding raised by grant recipients.
Greg Vangellow, President of R.W. Dake & Co., a commercial construction firm, shares his memories of the Erie Canal and why it is important today—as a father, business owner and upstate New York native—to preserve its heritage and recreational opportunities.

Why did you decide to support the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor?

My decision to donate started with the suggestion of a business associate. Admittedly, I did not know much about the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor before that introduction. But the canal has been a part of my life since I was a kid, living in Pittsford near Lock 32, and it has continued now that I live in Fairport with my family.

Despite learning to fish for carp, logging countless miles biking on the trails, feeding hundreds of ducks, watching my wife row on the canal, tug boat tours with my kids’ school and eating way too many ice cream cones along the water—I took the canal and all it has to offer for granted. I didn’t realize just how many memories we have that involve the canal until you asked me.

Now as a business owner, I can look at the canal with a different filter. It is a vibrant engine that adds so much—not only to the community where I live, but to the state as a whole. It is already a major player in the economies of the towns that are located on the canal, but I think it can also be used as an attraction for companies and people who are considering relocating here. With a little research and a couple of in depth discussions with Bob Radliff, Executive Director, I knew supporting the Corridor would be a wise investment.

FAVORITE CHILDHOOD CANAL MEMORY:

“There are a ton of memories, but the coolest was going through Lock 32 on a boat shortly after we had been on a school field trip. I knew what was going on and how it all worked!”
### DONATIONS, GRANTS AND SPONSORSHIPS

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<td>Erie Canalway Heritage Supporter ($1,000-4,999)</td>
<td>Ciminelli Real Estate Corporation, M &amp; T Bank / M &amp; T Charitable Foundation, Rome Community Foundation, Seneca Market LLC, The Kroger Group, Watkins Glen Harbor Hotel, 1000 Islands Harbor Hotel</td>
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*The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor leveraged more than $1.37 million in FY 2015 in support of program and project activities, consistent with our award-winning Preservation and Management Plan.*

### EXPENSES

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### CONSULTANTS

- Sarah E. Bifolks, Communications Consultant
- Kristine Fitzgerald, 2K Design
- Lela Katzman, Full Spectrum Communications
- Doug Teresco, USM Solutions, LLC
- Craig Williams

*Note: individual donations through 12/31/15. Our sincere apologies for any errors or omissions.*
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TRANSITIONS
Commissioner Peter Snyder retired from the NYS Department of Transportation in April and Christopher Walsh left the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation to work for SUNY CNSE. New DOT and DEC representatives to the Commission will be appointed in 2016. Vicky Daly, former Mayor of Palmyra, resigned from the Commission in June 2015. The Commission recognized Vicky for her many years of dedication and commitment to the canal at our October meeting. Tim Malchow resigned (in October) from the Heritage Fund Board of Directors. Shortly thereafter, the Board appointed Brad Packard of the Ciminelli Real Estate Corporation to the Board.