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2009 Quadricentennial Legacy Voyage Gets Underway

Free tours of the canal motorship Day Peckinpaugh in Cohoes August 1-2, 10 am to 6 pm

WATERFORD, NY- The historic canal motorship Day Peckinpaugh kicks off its 500-mile 2009 Quadricentennial Legacy Voyage at Matton Shipyard in Cohoes on Saturday and Sunday, August 1-2. The vessel will travel the Champlain and Hudson Corridor from Burlington, Vt. to New York Harbor, stopping at 14 ports-of-call for festivals, events, and free tours. The public is invited to step on board the 1921 canal motorship, as well as the 1901 Tug Urger, from 10 am to 6 pm both days.

The Legacy Voyage of the Day Peckinpaugh commemorates 400 years of maritime progress in the Empire State—from early exploration to ship innovation to canal building to the continued use and enjoyment of Champlain and Hudson waterways. The Day Peckinpaugh will be joined by the Tug Urger and other historic vessels at ports along the way.

“We invite people to come aboard to celebrate our past and present relationship with New York’s inland waterways,” said Joe Callahan, Chairman of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor Commission. “Thanks to our many partners at the national, state, and local levels, this Quadricentennial Voyage will connect people and ports from Lake Champlain to New York City.”

“This is a great opportunity for people to explore an authentic canal motorship that worked these waterways for more than 70 years,” said Erie Canalway Executive Director Beth Sciumeca. “While Henry Hudson, Samuel De Champlain, and Robert Fulton may be the stars of this Quadricentennial year, it’s the working men and women of New York, represented by the Day Peckinpaugh, who deserve credit for building the Empire State.”

The voyage is also set to showcase each unique port-of-call. This weekend’s shoreside festivities include traditional music by George Ward, clean water programs from 11 am to 2 pm, and free ice cream from 2 to 4 pm both days. Nearby sites of interest include the Waterford Harbor and Waterford Flight, Cohoes Falls, and Peebles Island State Park.

“The Day Peckinpaugh is one of many vessels that have graced the Champlain and Hudson corridors and it is only fitting that we celebrate the Quadricentennial by bringing this motorship to various ports-of-call. The rich history of this corridor, as evidenced in Cohoes by the Matton Shipyard, is one of many sites that will be showcased and I appreciate the efforts of all to make this a reality,” said John McDonald, Mayor of Cohoes.

The Day Peckinpaugh was built in 1921 as the first self-propelled motorship designed for transport on the newly opened Erie Barge Canal. Made to just fit into the locks and under the bridges of the canal, large motorships like the Day Peckinpaugh carried five times the cargo of their largest predecessors.

The Day Peckinpaugh is the last canal motorship in existence. It is owned by the New York State Museum as a traveling museum and classroom.

NY State Assemblyman Jack McEneny said: “The Day Peckinpaugh brings history to life. It allows people of all ages to see what water transportation has done for New York State and what it continues to do.”

New York State Museum Director Clifford Siegfried said, “We are pleased that the Day Peckinpaugh is undertaking this historic Quadricentennial Voyage, bringing the history and heritage of the state’s canal system to life for communities from New York City to Plattsburg.”

Carmella R. Mantello, Director of the New York State Canal Corporation, said: “As the Day Peckinpaugh travels throughout the Champlain and Hudson corridors as part of the Quadricentennial celebration, the public will have the opportunity to experience firsthand the rich maritime heritage of New York. The Day Peckinpaugh will also be joined by the historic Tug Urger, the Canal Corporation’s flagship vessel, throughout much of the trip. I encourage everyone to visit the ports-of-call along the way to experience the legacy of these historic vessels. The Corporation is proud to partner with many of our partners to help ensure this legacy continues.”

Robert D. Kuhn, Assistant Regional Director of State Park’s Saratoga/Capital District said: “On behalf of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) we are thrilled to be hosting this exciting quadricentennial event at Peebles Island State Park, one of the premiere state parks in the capital district. The attention that the Day Peckinpaugh has drawn to Matton Shipyard has greatly contributed to OPRHP’s efforts to start redeveloping this historic site, and this event will help expose the public to the fascinating history of Mattons and the future potential that the site holds.”

The Quadricentennial Voyage is organized by the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, in conjunction with Saratoga National Historical Park, the New York State Museum, the NYS Canal Corporation, and four community partners.

For more information and a schedule of events at 14 ports-of-call, visit: www.eriecanalway.org.

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