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Exhibits, Grants to Boost Erie Canal Communities *Commission annual meeting in Buffalo details schooner voyage.*

Buffalo, NY – New interpretive exhibits along Buffalo’s waterfront, \$200,000 in grants to assist canal communities, and the *Grand Canal Journey* of replica canal schooner *Lois McClure* are among the projects unveiled by the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor to preserve and promote the Erie Canal. The Erie Canalway is a relatively new federal program that is providing additional attention and assets to the canal corridor.

“We are thrilled to move from planning to action as we implement the Preservation and Management Plan for the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor,” said Eric Mower, Erie Canalway NHC Commission Chairman. “These projects call attention to the significant historic, recreational, educational, and natural resources that make the canal corridor distinct.”

New outdoor exhibits unveiled today are to be installed this fall at the Erie Canal Harbor in downtown Buffalo - the historic terminus of the Erie Canal. The three kiosks were produced by the National Park Service, a key partner of the Erie Canalway. The exhibits feature Buffalo’s transformation from pioneer outpost to bustling port city, as the canal linked east with west, opening the flow of goods, people, and ideas.

Thirteen additional communities will be producing similar interpretive signage and exhibits, as well as hosting events, thanks to \$200,000 in grants awarded today by the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor. From Albany to Buffalo, the grants are funding projects and programs that protect and celebrate the corridor’s distinct sense of place, while boosting heritage tourism and recreational opportunities. (*See attached grant awards list.*)

Among the grants announced today is a \$25,000 award to Buffalo’s Valley Community

Association in the Buffalo River Historical District, just upriver from the Erie Canal Harbor. Buffalo's grain milling history and connection to the Erie Canal will be highlighted in the exhibits. Other grant awards include a tourism hospitality training program to the Landmark Society of Western New York and waterfront improvement planning along the canal in Fort Ann, in Washington County.

This is the initial year of the Erie Canalway Grants Program, which seeks to fill a gap in funding for historic preservation, interpretation, and community revitalization projects in the canal corridor. These additional federal funds can also be used as a match by communities and non-profits for the traditional state grant programs.

“We had great interest in the first year of our grant program, which reinforces our goal to expand the initiative in future years and make a difference by preserving the heart and soul of our canal corridor communities,” said Frank Dean, Executive Director of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor.

Also announced today is the July 28-29 arrival in downtown Buffalo of the 90-foot canal schooner *Lois McClure*. It will stop at the recently refurbished Erie Canal Harbor, while making a 1,000-mile *Grand Canal Journey* across New York's canal system from July through September. The *McClure* is a full-scale working replica of an 1862 canal schooner – a unique sailing canal boat that used a combination of wind and mule power as it operated between the Finger Lakes and traditional canal communities, including Buffalo. The canal boat will be open to the public free of charge during the Buffalo visit.

“We're eager for people to come out to see this impressive vessel during the *Grand Canal Journey*” said Clinton Brown, Erie Canalway NHC Commissioner and a Buffalo resident. The schooner was built and is operated by the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum and is the most accurate canal replica ever constructed. “The goal of this special voyage is to educate the public about the national significance of the Erie Canal and the opportunity it can provide for canal community revitalization,” continued Brown. The Grand Canal Journey is made possible through a partnership among the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, The New York State Canal Corporation, and the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum, with support from numerous sponsors, including: National Grid, KeySpan, New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets-Pride of New York, Cabot and McCadam Cheese, Brookfield Power, and Saratoga Water.

The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor is one of only 37 congressionally designated National Heritage Areas. This federal program's goals are to preserve and interpret New York's historic canal system and the communities along its banks. By bringing additional focus and resources to the canal corridor, the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor will assure that this national treasure will serve once again as a key destination and source of renewal to more than 200 canal communities.

**Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor
2007 Pilot Grants Program Awards**

- **Canal Society of New York**, Cayuga Co., Old Erie Canal Heritage Park Interpretive Signage
- **The Corn Hill Waterfront & Navigation Foundation**, Monroe Co., Erie Canalway Cultural Heritage Interpretive Narratives
- **Village of Fairport**, Monroe Co., Historic Interpretive Signs and Information Kiosk
- **Valley Community Association**, Erie Co., Buffalo River Historical District Park Project, Interpretive Signage
- **Erie Canal Museum**, Onondaga Co., Interpretive Weighlock Exhibit
- **Chamber of Schenectady County**, Schenectady & Montgomery Co., Lock 7-12 Canalfest
- **Parks & Trails New York**, Erie Canalway Trail, all counties, Interactive Online Gateway for Outdoor Visitors to the ECNHC
- **Village of Fort Ann/Town of Fort Ann**, Washington Co., Feasibility Studies of Waterfront Improvements, Waterfront map, and plan
- **Landmark Society of Western New York**, Wayne, Monroe, Orleans, Erie & Niagara Counties, Enhancing the Visitor Experience Training Initiative
- **Historic Palmyra**, Wayne Co., Heritage Walking Tours and Museum Brochures
- **Village of Phoenix**, Oswego Co., Lock Island Pedestrian Access Improvement Project, Interpretive Signage and Brochure
- **Village of Jordan**, Onondaga Co., Erie Canal Heritage Walking Tour – Jordan, Interpretive Signage and Brochure
- **Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce Foundation**, Tompkins Co., Guide to the Ithaca Waterfront: Southern Gateway to the Erie Canal Panel