



Erie Canalway
National Heritage Corridor



New York State
Canal Corporation



Lake Champlain
MARITIME MUSEUM

“Grand Canal Journey”

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE- 6/22/07

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SCHOONER VOYAGE CELEBRATES ERIE CANALWAY

1,000-mile journey kicks off at the Waterford Harbor Visitor's Center on Friday

WATERFORD, NY (6/22/07)- History comes alive this summer on the famed Erie Canal as the 88-foot canal schooner *Lois McClure* embarks on a 100 day, 1,000-mile Grand Canal Journey on the historic waterway. The official *bon voyage* takes place on Friday, June 22 at 10 a.m. at Lock 2 above the Waterford Harbor Visitor's Center. Free tours, festivals, and events are planned at more than 25 ports as the *Lois McClure* journeys from Albany to Buffalo.

“The Grand Canal Voyage celebrates our past, showcases canal communities today, and points the way to a brighter future for upstate New York,” said Frank Dean, Executive Director, Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor. “The Erie Canal built the Empire State more than a century ago, and today it has the potential to become, once again, the magnet that draws people and commerce to canal communities.”

Carmella R. Mantello, Director of the New York State Canal Corporation said, “The Lois McClure invites New Yorkers and visitors alike to explore and celebrate this treasured resource and to make the Canal corridor a recreation and tourism destination this summer. We are excited to help bring this once-in-a-lifetime experience to New York's Canal communities and want to thank all of the sponsors, community organizations, and volunteers for their assistance in making the Grand Canal Journey a great success.”

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.

New York State Agriculture Commissioner Patrick Hooker said, “The Erie Canal played a vital role in shaping New York's food and wine industry and we are proud to have our Pride of New York Program sponsor this monumental journey of the Lois McClure that will celebrate the corridor's rich heritage and its ongoing agricultural bounty and economic importance.”

“We are committed to supporting our customers globally and locally. Being a sponsor for this voyage allows us to be a part of a journey through the heart of upstate New York that will bring a piece of history to the communities we have served for decades,” said William F. Edwards, president of New York Distribution for National Grid.

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[Press Release: Schooner Voyage Celebrates Erie Canalway, continued...]

“The Erie Canal holds a very important and special place in U.S. history as a major recreation, transportation, and development resource,” said David J. Manning, KeySpan's Executive Vice President for Corporate Affairs and Chief Environmental Officer. “KeySpan is proud to sponsor the Lois McClure voyage to shine a spotlight on upstate New York's heritage.”

The schooner *Lois McClure* is a full-scale replica of an 1862 sailing canal boat. Constructed in Burlington, Vt. and launched in 2004, the *Lois McClure* is an exact recreation of canal schooners found shipwrecked in the waters of Lake Champlain. The unique sailing-canal boats were designed to sail from lake cities to canal ports using wind power. Upon reaching a canal, the masts were lowered and centerboard raised, transforming the vessel into a typical canal boat.

Festivities and free tours are planned at the *Lois McClure's* first port-of-call in Ithaca on July 2-3, followed by events at 25 canal communities across the state. The boat will return to Waterford for the Tugboat Roundup on September 7-9, dock in Albany on September 11-12, and continue on the Champlain Canal, where events are scheduled in Mechanicville, Schuylerville, Fort Edward, and Whitehall through September 24, 2007. For a complete list of tours and events, visit: www.GrandCanalJourney.org.

ABOUT THE PARTNERS:

The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor is one of 37 congressionally designated National Heritage Areas. It partners with communities, governmental agencies, and nonprofit organizations to protect, enhance, and celebrate the corridor's nationally significant historic, natural, and scenic heritage. 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.

The New York State Canal Corporation, a subsidiary of the New York State Thruway Authority, is responsible for the maintenance, operation, preservation, and promotion of the 524-miles of interconnected waterways known as the New York State Canal System. The Canal Corporation is committed to preserving the legacy of this marvelous waterway and the towpaths that now make up a portion of the Canalway Trail, a multi-use recreational network of trails that spans from Buffalo to Albany. The Corporation works in partnership with community groups, local, state, and federal agencies, and the private sector to promote tourism and foster development and economic revitalization along the Canal System and in its historic communities.

Lake Champlain Maritime Museum brings to life the stories of Lake Champlain and its people through nautical exploration, hands-on exhibits, and learning adventures for all ages. Its mission is to preserve and share the rich history of Lake Champlain, and through its nautical archaeology research and outreach programs, that of other regional waterways.

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