

Ideas for Commemorating the Erie Canal Bicentennial

The Erie Canal has a big birthday in 2025. Use these ideas as you plan events or projects for 2025.

- **Take advantage of funding through the 2025 NYS Canal System Tourism Infrastructure and Events Grants Program.** The program will prioritize applications that help commemorate the last 200 years and get ready for the next 200. Be sure to clearly communicate your bicentennial plans in your application. Applications open on October 7, 2024 and are due November 15, 2025.
- **Give regular events a bicentennial refresh.** Consider the events and activities that you regularly host and incorporate a bicentennial theme into the content or title.
- **Tell your story.** What is your community or organization's unique canal connection? What stories have not been told? Incorporate a special activity, talk, or ceremony to your events to share your story. Whether you're hosting a bike ride, a paddling trip, or a festival, you can weave in local history or stories that show the canal's impact. Reach out to your local historian or historical society if needed to learn more.
- **Use the [Bicentennial Marketing Toolkit](#) graphics** in your promotional materials.
- **Use the official hashtag #ErieCanal200** when posting bicentennial-related content.
- **Look festive!** Put up banners, bunting, or flags. The more sites and communities that do, the greater the impact will be for residents and visitors. Order banners [here](#).
- **Collaborate with local or regional partners.** Combine resources to offer a larger event or offer a series of events hosted by several organizations to get more attention and reach a broader audience.
- **Be inclusive.** Reach out to specific organizations or groups in your community to welcome more people to the canal. Invite people with disabilities or people from underrepresented populations to your events. People with special needs often have questions or need more information about parking, bathrooms, or activities to help them determine whether the event is a good fit.
- **Consider the long term.** The bicentennial is a time to not only look back, but to plan for the future. Identify a legacy project or amenities for various canal system users, such as boaters, paddlers, bicyclists, and walkers/hikers/runners. If you are planning a new infrastructure project, incorporate universal design principles to ensure that your facilities can be used by people of all abilities.