



## Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor

# News Release

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## Erie Canalway Announces Major Gift from M&T Bank to Accelerate 'Next Century' Campaign

*With origins linked to the Erie Canal's opening, M&T Bank invests in the historic waterway's future*

WATERFORD, NY — The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor is pleased to announce \$100,000 in grant funding from M&T Bank to bolster the Erie Canalway Next Century Campaign. M&T Bank's gift will support efforts to ensure the canals that transformed America continue to be cared for and serve as an engine of economic and community development now and into the next century.

The Erie Canalway Next Century Campaign is a multi-faceted strategy designed to preserve the canal's heritage and grow its economic impact across the more than 200 communities within the Canalway Corridor. Attracting more than 3.3 million visitors every year for events and tours, the canals will remain a vital resource for recreation, tourism, and commerce thanks to this ambitious campaign.

"We are extremely grateful to M&T Bank for its leadership role in revitalizing communities connected by our waterways. We welcome other businesses to join us as we continue to improve the quality of life of more than three million upstate New York residents," said Bob Radliff, Executive Director of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor.

In addition to its financial support, M&T Bank continues to lend its leadership to furthering the legacy and economic impact of the Erie Canal. Mike Keegan, Senior Executive Vice President and Head of Community Banking at M&T Bank, recently joined the board of directors of the Erie Canalway Heritage Fund, Inc., the non-profit partner of the National Heritage Corridor, and Keith Belanger, M&T Bank Head of Corporate Services, serves as Honorary Chair of the World Canals Conference to be held in Buffalo in September 2025.

“The Erie Canal is an iconic part of our region’s history and heritage, serving as a vital connection that spurred economic growth and transformed communities across New York State and beyond,” Keegan said. “At M&T Bank, we take pride in that we are headquartered in Western New York and have a steadfast commitment to strengthening the places we call home. Supporting the Erie Canalway Next Century Campaign is an extension of the work we began nearly 170 years ago when we were founded. We look forward to being a part of the transformative impact of the Erie Canal for generations to come.”

M&T Bank traces its origins to the rapid growth of Western New York’s manufacturing industry spurred by the Erie Canal. Recognizing that manufacturers and commercial enterprises needed greater financing options to fuel their expansions, two entrepreneurs founded M&T in 1856 to provide the long-term loans necessary to finance durable manufacturing equipment. Today, it is one of the top full-service U.S.-based commercial banks, with over 21,000 employees and a long history of community-focused banking.

In commemoration of the Erie Canal's Bicentennial, the Erie Canalway Heritage Fund launched its [Next Century Campaign](#) to help steer a course toward an ever more vibrant, sustainable future along New York's extraordinary canals. For more information, visit: <https://eriecanalway.org/donate>

### **ABOUT THE ERIE CANALWAY NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR**

Since its grand opening in 1825, the Erie Canal remains an iconic symbol of American ingenuity and determination. The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor works to preserve the Nation’s extraordinary canal heritage, promote the Corridor as a world-class tourism destination, and foster vibrant communities connected by more than 500 miles of waterway. It achieves its mission in partnership with the National Park Service, New York State agencies, non-profit organizations, residents, and more than 200 communities across the full expanse of upstate New York.

[www.eriecanalway.org](http://www.eriecanalway.org)

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