



For Immediate Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

2017 World Canals Conference Expected to Bring More Than \$2 Million in Economic Impact to Syracuse Region

—Syracuse one year away from hosting international event—

Syracuse, N.Y. (Oct. 3, 2016) — In one year, the 2017 World Canals Conference (WCC) is set to take place in Syracuse from September 24 to 28 with a more than \$2 million indirect economic impact for the city of Syracuse. The conference will be held as the historic Erie Canal commemorates its bicentennial.

The 2017 WCC, which is expected to draw hundreds of international delegates and draw thousands of local and regional residents to waterfront events, is co-hosted by the New York State Canal Corporation, Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor and Visit Syracuse. It will be held at Marriott Downtown Syracuse and is sponsored by I Love NY and National Grid, along with many other businesses and foundations.

"There is so much about our region to celebrate," Visit Syracuse President David Holder said. "The World Canals Conference will not only allow us to show off our canal system and waterways, but also our museums, shops, restaurants and neighborhoods. I am proud of our region and am looking forward to celebrating with the entire community."

A recent study commissioned by the Canal Corporation found that New York's Canal System supports \$6.2 billion in non-tourism-related economic activity, in addition to its \$380 million tourism-based economic impact. Further, the study also determined that the canals support 26,472 jobs, \$1.6 billion in personal income, and \$702 million in tax revenue, both directly and indirectly.

"We are thrilled to have the 2017 World Canals Conference take place right here in Central New York," New York State Canal Corporation Director Brian U. Stratton said. "I applaud Governor Cuomo and New York State for their support in bringing this international spotlight to our storied Erie Canal in the bicentennial year of its groundbreaking."

The Erie Canal broke ground in Rome on July 4, 1817, and opened on October 26, 1825. It quickly became the most vital trade route in the young nation, and helped make New York City one of the world's most important ports and commercial centers.

"The Erie Canal is a crucial part of our cultural history in Central New York and our nation's history," Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor Executive Director Bob Radliff said. "Even after hundreds of years our inland waterways continue to play a critical role in the lives of people

throughout New York and the world. We are excited to share our history with an international audience and display all the work our region has done to let our canals continue to thrive."

"I am elated to see the World Canals Conference come to our hometown and am already eagerly anticipating the kick-off next year," World Canals Conference Honorary Chair Dr. Cornelius B. "Neil" Murphy Jr., SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry past president, said. "The event will bring a new visibility to our canals, inland waterways and the Syracuse region as whole."

Each year, the WCC brings hundreds of canal enthusiasts, professionals and scholars from around the world together to discuss canals and inland waterways as a means to promote tourism, spur economic and community development, improve environmental quality and exchange best practices on protection strategies for these historic sites.

"Our canals and waterways are essential to our region's economic strength and the social well-being of our communities," National Grid Upstate New York Executive Director Melanie Littlejohn said. "For that reason, National Grid is proud to take part in the 2017 conference and help support the growth and sustainability of these sites."

For more information on the event and to view a program schedule, visit wcc2017syracuse.com.

About Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor

Nearly 200 years after its construction, the Erie Canal remains an iconic symbol of American ingenuity and determination. The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor preserves our extraordinary canal heritage, promotes the Corridor as a world-class tourism destination, and fosters vibrant communities connected by more than 500 miles of waterway. We achieve our mission in partnership with the National Park Service, New York State agencies, non-profit organizations, local residents, and more than 200 communities across the full expanse of upstate New York. www.eriecanalway.org

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