

## Canal Corporation Accomplishments – 2017

### **Transition of Canals from Thruway to NYPA**

Effective January 1, 2017, the Canal Corporation successfully transitioned from the New York State Thruway Authority to the Power Authority, which followed a year-long planning and implementation effort. This transfer included a shift in responsibility for management of the State Canal System from the Thruway Authority to the Power Authority.

### **Erie Canal Bicentennial**

The Canal Corporation sponsored and engaged in a host of activities in 2017 to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the start of construction on the Erie Canal in 1817, and the beginning of nine year bicentennial period which culminates in the 200th anniversary of the Canal's opening in 2025. Several signature events marked the milestone, beginning with an official opening of the Erie Canal in Waterford with the Lt. Governor on May 19. Other signature events in Lockport, Fort Hunter, Syracuse, Rochester, and Lockport were held throughout a season which also featured the waiver of fees for recreational vessels on the Canal.

The replica Canal Schooner Lois McClure toured the Canal from end to end, providing visitors and residents alike an opportunity to step aboard and travel back through history to a time when boats like the Lois McClure were ubiquitous on the Canal. The Lois McClure was joined in certain ports by the Corning Museum of Glass, as it provided live glass blowing demonstrations aboard its glass blowing barge as part of a preview for its 2018 cross-canal journey, which will recreate Corning's move of its factory from Brooklyn to Corning by barge in 1868.

The Albany Symphony Orchestra also performed live in canal communities during a week-long "Water Music NY" tour. The performances featured traditional pieces, as well as original works from local artists which debuted during the project. Performances occurred on both land and aboard barges, with the last performance taking place aboard a barge moored in Lock 35 in Lockport in conjunction with a Canal Corporation Bicentennial Signature Event.

### **World Canals Conference**

The World Canals Conference returned to New York State for only its third time in 2017 to mark the start of the Erie Canal Bicentennial. The annual event is hosted by Inland Waterways International and was held in Syracuse from September 24 to September 28. Canal entrepreneurs, enthusiasts, historians and government leaders traveled to Syracuse from around the world to hear from contemporaries about projects, initiatives and strategies being employed by governments and canal managers around the globe. Next year's conference is being held in Athlone, Ireland.

### **Lock O-7 Rehabilitation**

The Canal Corporation embarked on a 3-year, \$25 million complete rehabilitation of Lock O-7 on the Erie Canal. The lock, which was constructed in the early 20th century, will be

substantially rebuilt to ensure its stability, safety and operational readiness for the next 100 years. The project, which got underway last November, will include the construction of a new lock house and lock operator shelters, installation of a cofferdam and rock anchors, refacing of lock walls and approach walls, and refurbishing of operating machinery.

### **Reimagine the Canals**

The Canal Corporation announced a major global competition – Reimagine the Canals – in September, 2017 to solicit visionary, implementable concepts and initiatives that promote the Canal System's heritage, foster economic development and tourism, and improve the Canal System's long term financial sustainability. The goals of the competition include promoting the Canal System as a tourist destination and recreational asset; sustainable development along the route; the heritage and historic values of the Canal System; and the long-term financial sustainability of the Canal System.

A jury of experts from a variety of related fields have been empaneled to review 143 applications and select up to 8 finalists which may receive up to \$50,000 to further refine proposals. It is anticipated that up to 3 winners will be announced in September, 2018.