



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Erie Canalway
National Heritage Corridor

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Erie Canalway News Release

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Music at Thruway Travel Plaza 34 Celebrates Erie Canal Heritage *“Fifteen Miles on the Erie Canal” Revival!*

WATERFORD, NY- As students head back to school and New Yorkers set off for one last summer weekend, some travelers will get a musical introduction to the waterway that built the Empire State. Musician Paul Swiatek will be performing traditional Erie Canal songs on Saturday, August 30th from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Chittenango Travel Plaza #34 of the New York State Thruway, westbound between exits 34 and 34A on Interstate Route 90. The music is aimed at calling attention to the many historic, cultural, and recreational assets of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, accessible from the Thruway.

“Thruway travelers come within miles of the most famous canal in the United States and often are not aware that they are so close to such a significant part of the American story,” says Beth Sciumeca, Executive Director of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor. “We hope Paul’s music inspires people to take a closer look and consider a side trip to one of the many communities and historic sites within the Corridor.”

The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor stretches 524 miles across the full expanse of upstate New York. It encompasses New York’s canal system and the 234 communities that grew along its shores.

Carmella Mantello, Director of the New York State Canal Corporation, said, "We receive thousands of inquiries each year about traveling by boat and bicycle along the New York State Canal System. These are wonderful ways to experience the landscape, small canal villages, urban cultural institutions, and beautiful farmland of upstate New York."

[more]

[Music on the Thruway, continued]

Musician Paul Swiatek knows first hand what it is like to live in a canal community. He lives with his family in Rochester, New York, and takes his two sons fishing on the Erie Canal. In an arts-in-education project in 2006, Paul worked with teacher Meg Vecchi's 4th grade class at Canandaigua Elementary School to write song verses about local canal figure Jesse Hawley that Paul later put to music as part of the 4th grade English and Social Studies curriculum.

Visitors to Travel Plaza 34 will be sure to hear song selections from the CD produced by Paul Swiatek and Meg Vecchi's 4th grade class, as well as canal classic *Low Bridge* ("Fifteen miles on the Erie Canal").

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Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor preserves and interprets the New York State canal system which has been in continuous operation from 1825 until today – longer than any other constructed transportation system on the continent. It is federally designated as nationally significant for its cultural and natural heritage and its collection of sites are operated, owned, or managed by a variety of local municipalities, state agencies, and federal entities. A federal commission provides oversight for the Corridor.

For more information, visit www.eriecanalway.org