



In partnership with the National Park Service



2021

A YEAR OF Impacts and Images

Two hundred years ago, the Erie Canal was hailed as a symbol of American ingenuity. Its impact was immediate and far reaching. Connecting the Atlantic Ocean to the Great Lakes by water, it transformed upstate New York—and our country—forever.

Like those who were drawn to the canals before us, the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor is investing in innovative approaches and infusing new ideas and resourcefulness to advance preservation, tourism, and community development along the canals. Combined with a dogged commitment to hard work and a sharp focus on the mission at hand, we are succeeding at reaching our goals.

Key to our approach is working in partnership with organizations, agencies, and individuals at the local, state, and federal levels. You will see in this annual report how these collaborations are bringing good ideas to life and fueling community and economic revitalization.

In these challenging times, New York's iconic canals remain a powerful reminder that coming together to advance a shared vision is a formula for success. Let's keep working together to improve the quality of life for Corridor residents and make the NYS Canal System—its communities, waterways, and trails—a welcoming destination for all.



Established by an Act of Congress in 2000, the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor spans 524 miles across the full expanse of upstate New York. It includes the Erie, Cayuga-Seneca, Oswego, and Champlain canals and their historic alignments. The Corridor encompasses 4,834 square miles in 23 counties and is home to 3.2 million people.

2021

By the Numbers

\$108,787

Grants awarded to
13
organizations and
municipalities

197

Educators and museum
specialists participated in
6
educational workshops
and forums

7,457

Households watched our
new documentary film
*Floating Ideas: How the
Erie Canal Helped Shape
America* when it was
released in June, according
to Nielsen Ratings

60,000

Erie Canalway
Map & Guides distributed
19,500
Erie Canalway Calendars
distributed

159

Miles of the NYS Canalway
Water Trail adopted by
41
volunteer stewards

238,921

Miles logged for the
Canalway Challenge
1,455
Challenges created

42,000

people attended
27
sponsored events

600

Water Trail Guidebooks
distributed
200
Paddlers turned out for
Paddle the Mohawk Valley

Erie Canal at Schoharie Crossing

IMPACT! GRANTS

As the pandemic continued to present unprecedented challenges across the Canalway Corridor, it was especially gratifying to support diverse and innovative projects that contributed to the resilience of canal communities.

13
non-profit organizations
and municipalities
received Erie Canalway
IMPACT! Grants
in 2021 totaling
\$108,787

IMPACT! Grants advanced vital work to preserve and showcase canal heritage, educate youth, and welcome people to explore the canal in their local communities. The grants leveraged an additional \$146,630 in private and public project support.



*Corn Hill Navigation,
Pittsford*

Montezuma Audubon Center, Savannah



Erie Canal Museum, Syracuse

GRANT RECIPIENTS

Buffalo Maritime Center (\$12,000) is creating an exhibit dedicated to the Haudenosaunee alliance of Native Americans and Erie Canal history to complement the Center's building of the Packet Boat, *Seneca Chief*.

Canal Society of New York State (\$5,300) is installing interpretive signs to improve outreach and accessibility at the Erie Canal Heritage Park at Port Byron.

Chittenango Landing Canal Boat Museum (\$9,967) produced a virtual 3-D tour of the museum complex and a STEM-based distance learning program for youth.

City of Amsterdam (\$11,757) is instituting creative, place-based visitor enhancements at Riverlink Park and Mohawk Valley Gateway Overlook.

Corn Hill Navigation in Pittsford (\$11,388) implemented a variety of new educational initiatives aboard the *Sam Patch*, including a bird watching tour and hands-on learning for students.

Erie Canal Museum in Syracuse (\$11,000) offered *Erie Eats*, a major exhibition, tours, lectures, bike rides, and tastings which explored the canal's many impacts on agriculture and foodways.

Erie Canal Discovery Center/Niagara County Historical Society in Lockport (\$4,180) developed five virtual lessons on the history, geography, engineering and national impact of the Erie Canal.

Lumber City Development Corporation in North Tonawanda (\$3,500) created a canal-themed mural at Gateway Harbor Park, strengthening the community's sense of place and canal heritage.

Montezuma Audubon Center in Savannah (\$10,865) is developing an early detection invasive species management program and STEM-based educational opportunities at the Montezuma Wetlands Complex.

Village of Brockport (\$4,830) enhanced Brockport's self-guided walking tour by upgrading tour materials and interpretive panels.

Village of Medina (\$10,500) installed an ADA accessible kayak launch located on the Erie Canal near downtown Medina.

Village of Newark (\$1,500) repaired vandalism damage to a prominent mural on the canal.

Western New York Land Conservancy, Inc. in East Aurora (\$12,000) developed engineering and design plans for *The Riverline*, a project that will transform an unused rail corridor into a nature trail and greenway along the Buffalo River near the terminus of the Erie Canal.

IMPACT! Grants were made possible with funding support provided by the National Park Service and the NYS Canal Corporation.

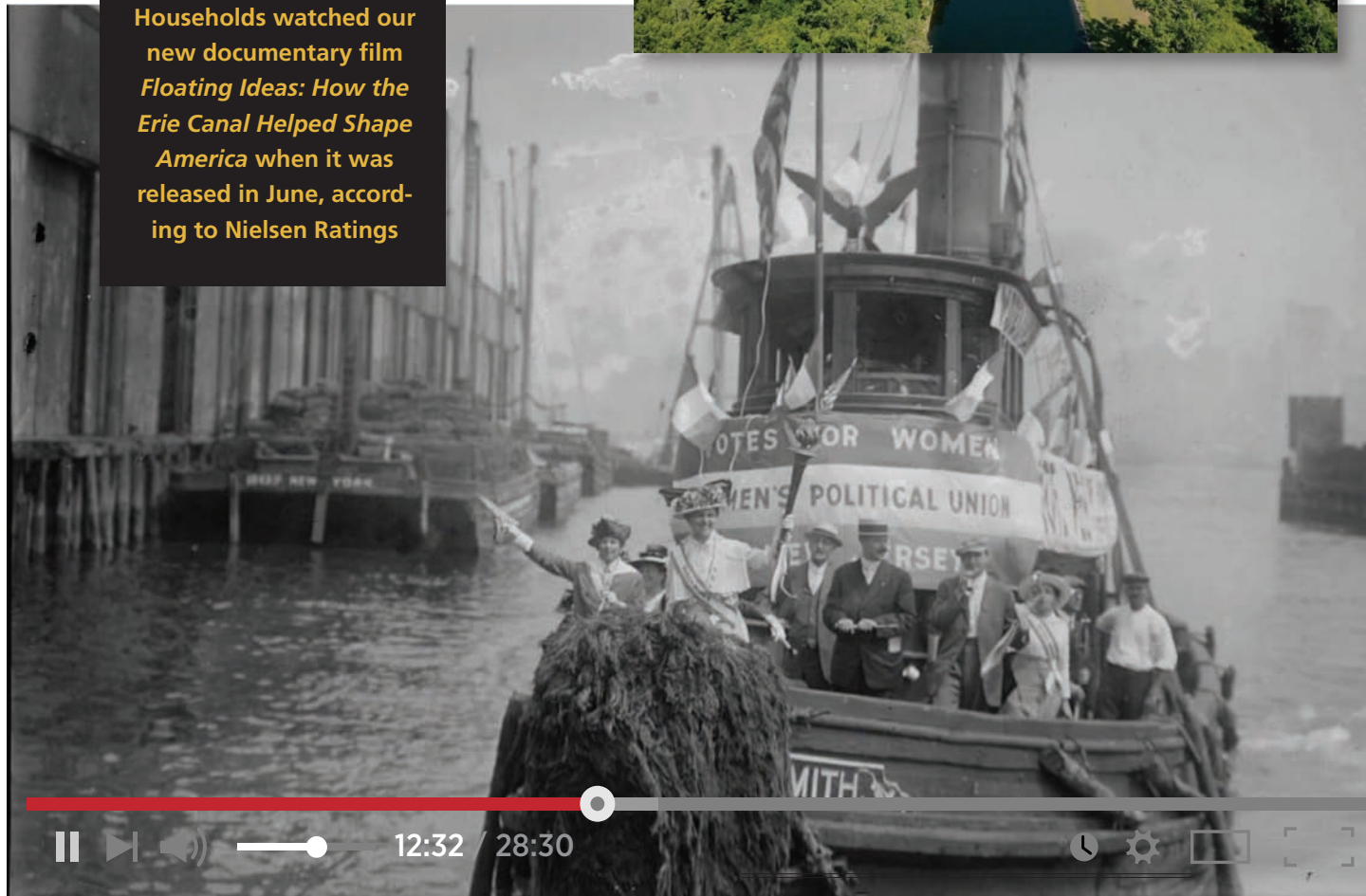
INSPIRING CHANGE

The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, in partnership with the National Park Foundation and WCNY-TV, released *Floating Ideas: How the Erie Canal Helped Shape America* in June. The half-hour documentary examines the spread of ideas along

the Erie Canal, with an emphasis on women's rights, suffrage, and the quest for social justice. More than 100 people attended an online forum where we explored the film's relevance to social justice movements today.



7,457
Households watched our new documentary film *Floating Ideas: How the Erie Canal Helped Shape America* when it was released in June, according to Nielsen Ratings



Prominent scholars, historians, and influencers appear in the film, including Coline Jenkins, great, great granddaughter of Elizabeth Cady Stanton.



A 9-minute companion video and curriculum for grades 6-12, called *Opening the Gates to Change: The Erie Canal and Women's Suffrage*, makes the quest for voting rights relevant for young people and explores ways that youth are making their voices heard in the face of today's pressing issues.



The documentary was produced by WCNY Public Media for the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor with funding support from the National Park Foundation, the National Park Service, and the New York State Canal Corporation.

WORKSHOPS

In collaboration with International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, we held five virtual workshops attended by 87 staff and volunteers at historic and cultural sites, museums, and national park sites. The workshops focused on volunteer recruitment and retention, and how to tell difficult stories.



Schoharie Crossing State Historic Site, Fort Hunter

MATTON SHIPYARD PRESERVATION AND ADAPTIVE REUSE INITIATIVE

We completed design and engineering drawings for building stabilization, shoreline restoration, and soil remediation to advance the Matton Shipyards Preservation and Adaptive Reuse Initiative in Cohoes. After securing historic objects, buildings on site were cleaned of all remaining non-hazardous materials. We also developed five new interpretive wayside panels to be installed in early 2022, in partnership with the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

Matton Shipyards

A Small Yard with a Mighty Mission



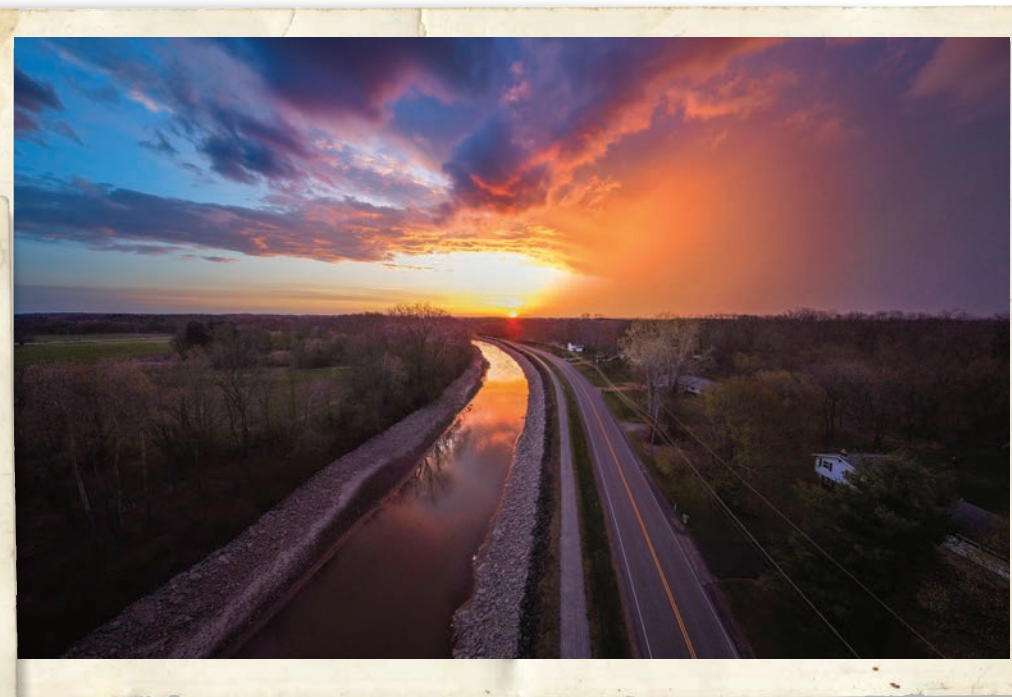
BIPARTISAN EXCHANGE



In August, we hosted Congressmen David McKinley (R-WV-1) and Paul Tonko (D-NY-20) as part of the American Congressional Exchange (ACE), sponsored by the Bipartisan Policy Center in Washington, D.C. We were honored to represent National Heritage Areas and proudly showcase the NYS Canal System by taking the Congressmen to the Waterford Flight of Locks.

INNOVATIVE EDUCATION

With support from the Central New York Community Foundation, we brought together the Museum of Science and Technology (MOST) and the Erie Canal Museum to develop and implement a cross-curricular education program combining science, engineering, and history. Lessons, field trips, and hands-on activities helped students understand the engineering design process used to solve a variety of problems faced during canal construction, from elevation changes to crossing rivers to weighing boats. The innovative curriculum will now become part of our Ticket to Ride program offerings.



MATTON SHIPYARD ADVISORY COMMITTEE

- John Callaghan**, Committee Chair, Erie Canalway Commission
- Barbara Blanchard**, Erie Canalway Commission
- Alane Ball Chinian**, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
- Art Cohn**, Affiliated Scholar: Institute of Nautical Archaeology at Texas A&M University
- Carlos Cortes**, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
- Joe Finan**, Erie Canalway Heritage Fund Board
- Joe Seman-Graves**, City of Cohoes
- John Joyce**, NYS Canal Corporation
- Mark Peckham**, Hudson River Maritime Museum

ERIE CANALWAY PHOTO CONTEST AND CALENDAR

More than 300 images submitted for the 16th Annual **Erie Canalway Photo Contest** remind us that the NYS Canal System is a state and national treasure worthy of preservation and celebration. We distributed 19,500 calendars to showcase the contest's winning images, like this one of Adams Basin by Joe Pompili.

CANALWAY CHALLENGE

People from 25 states and Washington D.C. walked, ran, cycled, and paddled 238,921 miles on the Canalway Trail and NYS Canal System as part of the Canalway Challenge. More than 1,130 individuals, 300 teams, and 28 organizations signed on.

238,921
Miles logged for the
Canalway Challenge

1,455
Challenges created



RECREATION and TOURISM



The most popular choice of miles pledged in 2021 was 360; in 2020 it was 15. Several participants completed epic End-to-End journeys, while others used the Canalway Challenge to overcome obstacles.



We are grateful for the promotional support of many organizations and individuals, including the NYS Canal Corporation, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, NYS Tourism Industry Association, county tourism promotion agencies, visitor centers, historic sites, and canalside businesses.

EVENT SUPPORT

The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor and the New York State Canal Corporation teamed up to support **27 events** in 2021 to showcase the Canalway Corridor's nationally significant heritage and the tremendous recreational appeal of the waterway and

Canalway Trail. After a year with very few events in 2020, we were pleased to support community events that brought 42,000 people to the canals in safe and fun ways.



Brockport

Events included recreational activities, tours, concerts, and heritage celebrations that brought residents and visitors to experience all that canal communities have to offer.

This year's event highlights included a return of *Cycling the Erie Canal* hosted by Parks & Trails New York, summer concerts on the Erie Canal in Newark, Pittsford, Brockport, and Seneca Falls, *Kayak Through History Tours* in Schenectady, *Amsterdam's Riverfest*, *Local History Cruises* on the Champlain Canal in Schuylerville, and *Doors Open Buffalo*.



Cycling the Erie Canal



Beers, Bikes, and Barges, Canastota



Local History Cruise, Schuylerville



Capital Walls Mural Bike Tour, Albany

ERIE CANALWAY ACCESSIBLE TOURISM INITIATIVE

We made significant strides toward our goal of welcoming people of all ages and diverse accessibility needs to the Canalway Corridor. Our efforts in 2021 included building partnerships with disability advocates to offer programs and events, conduct accessibility assessments for 20 canal-related attractions, and develop new itineraries to be released in 2022.



We worked with several organizations to host and promote events that invited people with disabilities and their families and friends to experience adaptive recreation, music, and food along the canals. More than 300 people participated in events hosted by Rochester Accessible Adventures, the Fitness Inclusion Network at SUNY Upstate Medical University, ARC Wayne, the Village of Brockport, and the Erie Canal Museum in Syracuse.



NEW YORK STATE CANALWAY WATER TRAIL

The canals continue to attract all sorts of paddlers, from adventurous solo thru-paddlers to weekend explorers to first-timers. Our *New York State Canalway Water Trail Guidebook*, suggested best bet trips, Facebook group, online map and on-the-ground water trail signs, and volunteer stewards are helping to make the NYS Canalway Water Trail an exciting paddling destination.



Erie Canal, Fairport

We launched the **NYS Canalway Water Trail Stewardship Program** in April with 41 enthusiastic volunteers. With training and tools in hand, these dedicated individuals, families, groups, and organizations went to work, helping to ensure that the canals are welcoming and safe for paddlers. This program will continue in 2022, with the goal of covering additional miles of the waterway.



Stewards' gathering on the Champlain Canal, Mechanicville



More than 200 paddlers enjoyed the scenic and historic Erie Canal/Mohawk River during **Paddle the Mohawk Valley**, our signature paddling event, on August 7. We started at Schoharie Crossing, paddled through Locks 12 and 11, and ended at Port Jackson, where everyone gathered for lunch on the lawn and enjoyed the beautiful day.



Our newly published *New York State Canal System Hand-Launch Facility Design Guide* shares best practices for communities and organizations looking to install or improve hand-launch facilities for paddlers on the NYS Canal System.

NYS CANALWAY WATER TRAIL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Karl Beard, retired, NPS Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance

Fred Bonn, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Mike Cavanaugh, American Canoe Association

Paul Comstock, Erie Canalway Heritage Fund Board

Sasha delPeral, NYS Canal Corporation

Kris Fitzgerald, 2k Design

Scott Keller, Hudson River Valley Greenway

Alex Kuttesch, Montgomery County

Donna Larkin, Upstate Kayak Rentals

41

Volunteer Stewards

159

Miles Adopted

365

Work Visits

433

Hours

127

Trash Bags Filled

FINGER LAKES CANALWAY EXPERIENCE COUNCIL

This new council serves as an on-the-ground link between Erie Canalway and the local community in the Finger Lakes Region to help inform regional needs and spread the word about Erie Canalway programming, experiences, preservation, and stewardship.



COUNCIL MEMBERS

- Kal Wysokowski**,
Canandaigua, Committee Chair,
Erie Canalway Commission
- Scott Bell**, Watkins Glen,
Hart Hotels
- Judy McKinney Cherry**,
Watkins Glen, Erie Canalway
Heritage Fund Board
- Kevin Clark**, Fairport
- Paul Comstock**, Houston, TX,
Erie Canalway Heritage Fund Board
- Annette Jiminez Gleason**,
Rochester Area Community
Foundation
- Susan Holland**, Ithaca,
Erie Canalway Commission
- Nicole Mahoney**, Canandaigua,
Break the Ice Media
- Bob Stivers**, Geneva, Stivers
Seneca Marine & Lake Street
Station Winery



CANALWAY RECREATIONAL HUB

We continued to work closely with the Tonawandas on implementation of a pilot Canalway Recreational Hub at the **Gateway Harbor of the Tonawandas**. The goal is to develop an immersion point where residents and visitors alike will be able to enhance their canal experiences with comprehensive amenities and services. In November, Governor Kathy Hochul delivered transformational news that will further fuel this initiative. North Tonawanda was selected as the recipient of a \$10 million Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) award to “make their downtown a vibrant, mixed-use district centered on the confluence of two waterfronts: the Niagara River and the Erie Canal, to create a unified and interconnected environment as the ‘Gateway to the Erie Canal.’”

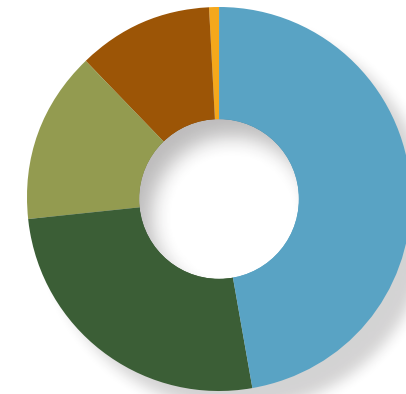
2021

FINANCIAL REPORT

For the period October 1, 2020 through September 30, 2021

SUPPORT & REVENUE

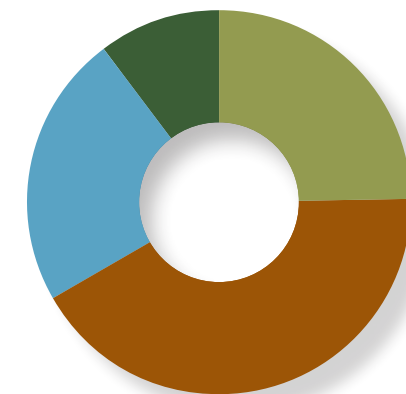
■ Federal	\$739,285
■ State	\$407,045
■ Contributions, Grants & Sponsorships	\$226,071
■ In-kind Contributions	\$177,959
■ Program Fees & Other	\$12,446
Total	\$1,562,806



By working with municipal and nonprofit partners, Erie Canalway also leveraged \$1,458,034 in FY2021 in support of program and project activities.

EXPENSES

■ Preserve & Share Our Extraordinary Heritage	\$377,415
■ Promote the Corridor as a World Class Destination	\$634,933
■ Foster Vibrant Communities Connected by the Waterway	\$349,362
■ Program Support, Management & Resource Development	\$155,984
Total	\$1,517,694



* The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor benefits from the work of two entities—a federal Commission and the nonprofit Erie Canalway Heritage Fund, Inc. These simplified financial statements reflect a summary of both entities. The Commission auditor is Jones & Company, PC. The Heritage Fund auditor is Cusack & Company, CPAs LLC. More detailed and audited financial statements for both entities may be requested by contacting our office. In addition, financial statements for the Erie Canalway Heritage Fund may be obtained from the NYS Office of the Attorney General's Charities Bureau, www.charitiesnys.com or (212) 416-8686.

DONATIONS, GRANTS AND SPONSORSHIPS

Erie Canalway Leadership Circle (\$10,000+)

Emil Muller Foundation
Montgomery County and the New York State Department of State under Title 11 of the Environmental Protection Fund
National Park Foundation, with the generous support of partners including Union Pacific Railroad and donors across the country
National Park Service
New York State Canal Corporation/New York Power Authority
New York State's Empire State Development and the I LOVE NEW YORK Division of Tourism under the Regional Economic Development Council Initiative
New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation

Erie Canalway Legacy Partners (\$5,000-9,999)

Brookfield Renewable

Erie Canalway Heritage Supporters (\$1,000-4,999)

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Businesses, Organizations and Foundations (up to \$999)

AmazonSmile Foundation
Benderson Development Company, LLC
Bergmann Associates
Blue Heron Cottage
Buffalo Maritime Center
Community Foundation for the Greater Capital Region
Ess-Kay Yards, Inc., Kimberly Vorchheimer
GE Foundation
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NYS Society Children of the American Revolution
Penman Partners, Dennis Penman
Rant, LLC, Ray Rybak
Sinatra & Company
STS Steel, Inc.
The Baird Foundation
The Coppola Firm
The Krog Group LLC
Robert and Susan Touhsaent Charitable Fund at the Rochester Area Community Foundation
United Way of Buffalo & Erie County
United Way of Central New York
United Way of Greater Capital Region
United Way of Western New York-Rochester
Xylem, Inc.

Individuals (up to \$999)

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Great blue heron, Cayuga-Seneca Canal

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Note: individual donations through 12/31/2021. Our sincere apologies for any errors or omissions. Please contact us at 518-237-7000 x 207 with any corrections.



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 (518) 237-7000
 www.eriecanalway.org

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TRANSITIONS AND NEWS

More than 120 guests gathered in October to honor founding Heritage Fund Board Chair **Tom Blanchard** for his decades of service in support of upstate New York waterways and waterfront redevelopment. We said farewell to retiring Commissioner **Peter Ryan**, NYS Department of Transportation, and Board Member **Kent Barwick**. We gratefully acknowledge their insights and contributions to strengthening the organization. Joining us this year is staff member **Patrick Stenshorn** who serves as Education Program Manager.