

# Travel writers tour Erie Canal

Neeti Upadhye, Staff writer 6:53 p.m. EDT June 6, 2014



(Photo: Neeti Upadhye/staff photographer)

International and domestic travel writers are exploring Rochester and the Erie Canal this weekend as part of the state's initiative to promote area tourism.

The five journalists — who write for *National Geographic* and publications in China, Italy and Philadelphia — spent Friday afternoon in the village of Fairport traversing the canal and learning about the waterway's rich history. They will also get to participate in Canal Nights festivities Saturday evening.

"New York is like a super vacation for me," said Renee Gordon, a historic and cultural tourism writer for the *Philadelphia Sun*. "For Philadelphians and people in my region it's a no-brainer."

Village of Fairport Mayor Fritz May said the tour was a great chance to show people the variety of commercial development opportunities in a canal town. He pointed to the dinner cruises, bus tours, boating rentals and retail stores near the water.

In addition to Fairport, the tour covered downtown Rochester, Pittsford, Palmyra and a visit to Letchworth State Park.

The canal media tour is sponsored by "I Love NY," the New York State Canal Corporation and VisitRochester as part of Gov. Andrew Cuomo's \$12 million "Market NY" campaign. In May, Cuomo announced that he will [increase the state's advertising budget by 50 percent](#) ([/story/news/politics/blogs/vote-up/2014/05/14/the-boardwalk-empire-state-bussemi-among-stars-in-i-love-ny-ads/9091755/](#)) to promote tourism in this fiscal year.

"The Governor knows we have an enormous economic engine in this regional canal system," said Brian Stratton, director of the New York State Canal Corporation, citing that tourism revenue from the state's four-canal system generated around \$380 million last year.

A public relations firm associated with "I Love NY" invited members of the media on the tour who they thought would best tell the region's story and reach a wider audience.

"I am from China and most Chinese people don't know anything about New York State — only New York City," said Emilie Huijue Ye, a staff reporter at the *China 21<sup>st</sup> Century Business Herald*. "I want to show them a picture of typical American life."

She said her favorite part about the Erie Canal was the ability to have a relaxed and tailored experience by renting a boat with family and friends.

Gordon described the canal as a frontier land that attracted people with "strong ideas and a certain moral courage."

"The underground railroad came through here and I don't think it could have played out this way anywhere else," she said.

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