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Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council Announces Upgrades to Fairport's Erie Canal Waterfront

The Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council today announced that the Fairport IDA has signed its contract with the state and issued permits for significant upgrades to the Erie Canal Waterfront on the strength of a \$134,238 grant awarded as part of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo's Regional Council initiative. The Canalside Promenade improvement project will increase the capacity to entertain thousands of visitors each year during the annual Fairport Canal Days and other events, which will help grow local businesses and spur job creation. The project is consistent with recommendations in the FLREDC Strategic Plan to create investment in community development, enhance the natural and scenic beauty of the waterfront, and support efforts that strengthen small local businesses.

"The Erie Canal continues to generate significant economic activity for Upstate New York long after its original run as one of the most innovative projects in state history," said Joel Seligman, President of the University of Rochester and Regional Council Co-chair. "The upgrades to Fairport's waterfront will bring more events to the area, and with that comes increased visitor spending at local businesses and greater employment opportunities for the surrounding communities."

"The upgrades to Fairport's Canalside Promenade is a great example of a community taking pride in its history while taking the right steps to ensure a bright future," said Danny Wegman, CEO of Wegmans Food Market and Regional Council Co-chair. "The Council is proud to support such a community-driven project that will create much-needed jobs and help area businesses grow."

The Waterfront upgrades will include new benches, lights, bike racks, brick pavers, landscaping and improved pedestrian access to the south bank. Additionally, new docks will be constructed east of the Parker Street Bridge with the assistance of a \$584,000 grant from the New York State Department of State. The work will take place from the lift bridge over the Erie Canal at Main Street, eastward to the Park Street Bridge, and on toward Church Street.

“The Village of Fairport has embraced the Erie Canal as its second Main Street for more than 30 years. We appreciate the fine relationship we have with the Canal Corporation and Director Stratton. We look forward to a very successful waterfront project and improved recreational use of the iconic Erie Canal,” said Mayor Frederick “Fritz” May.

Components of this latest project include new benches, lights, bike racks, brick pavers, landscaping and improved pedestrian access to the south bank. New docks will be constructed east of the Parker Street Bridge with the assistance of a \$584,000 grant from the New York State Department of State.

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The announcement Friday was made in conjunction with the Fairport Canal Days event, June 1-3, which attracts thousands to the historic village in Monroe County.

Last year, a total of \$785 million was awarded through the Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) for job creation and community development projects consistent with each region’s strategic plan. As part of that process, the Fairport Promenade project was awarded a \$134,238 Canalway Matching Grant from the New York State Canal Corporation.

State Canal Director Brian U. Stratton said, “The village of Fairport is an example how a community can capitalize on its proximity to New York’s historic and beautiful Erie Canal. The Canal Days festival this weekend is one of many public events that are centered on the Fairport Promenade. Close to \$6 million being invested in public and private funds to enhance the canal front and adjacent properties.”

The Canalway Grants Program includes a total of \$1 million in competitive grants available to eligible municipalities and 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations along the New York State Canal System. Projects are intended to meet the objectives of the Regional Economic Development Councils and the NYS Canal Recreationway Plan.

State Sen. James Alesi said, "The canal is at the heart of the Fairport business district and the proposed improvements will further enhance the synergy between the waterfront and the businesses that line it."

Assemblyman Mark Johns said, “I am proud to assist the Village of Fairport in receiving the funding for improvements to the historic Erie Canal. These upgrades are sure to boost tourism, economic development and the quality of life for all who enjoy the Canal.”

To learn more about each regional council and their economic development plans, visit www.nyworks.ny.gov .

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