



NEWS RELEASE

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Bicyclists Bring Business Roundtable and Bike-a-Round Events to Help Wayne County Communities Attract Cyclists, October 25 and 26

Two events that aim to help Canalway Trail communities take advantage of the growing bicycle tourist market will be held in the Wayne County communities of Savannah and Newark.

On Tuesday, October 25, Parks & Trails New York (PTNY) and NYS Canal Corporation will offer "Bicyclists Bring Business: Canalway Trail Tourism for Your Downtown!," an evening presentation that is part of the Wayne County Nature-based Tourism Summit, organized by the Wayne County Business Council. The event will be held at 5 PM on Tuesday, October 25 at the Montezuma Audubon Center (2295 State Route 89, Savannah). The presentation will focus on the demographics and needs of the bicycle tourist, as well as offering tips for making Wayne County communities and businesses more bike-friendly and attractive to outdoor recreationists. Representatives from Audubon New York and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation will present on birding and its economic impact in Wayne County. There will also be time for networking and light refreshments.

Local business owners, elected officials, Chambers of Commerce, Tourism Promotion Agencies, and interested citizens are invited to attend. Attendees will receive a copy of the handbook, [*Bicyclists Bring Business: A Guide for Attracting Bicyclists to New York's Canal Communities*](#), which was produced by PTNY and the NYS Canal Corporation.

As a follow up to the roundtable, PTNY and local trails advocacy group Trailworks will host a community Bike-a-Round on October 26 in the Village of Newark. Participants will bring their bikes and meet at 10 AM in the parking lot of the Newark Garden Hotel (125 N. Main Street, Newark), alongside the Erie Canalway Trail (ECT). They'll ride through Newark and on several miles of the ECT to experience Wayne County and the connections to nearby communities from the perspective of a cycling tourist. Afterward, they'll discuss the results of the Bike-a-Round during lunch at a local restaurant. All bicyclists must wear a helmet.

2016 Bicyclists Bring Business events are organized by PTNY and the NYS Canal Corporation and hosted by Trailworks, the Wayne County Business Council, and Wayne County Tourism.

New York State Canal Corporation Director Brian U. Stratton said, "The Canalway Trail draws scores of enthusiastic cyclists each year who are looking to explore the banks of the historic Canal system. Closing the gaps along the Canalway Trail continues to be a major goal to help connect these cyclists to various attractions along the trail and fuel the economies of the towns and villages it traverses."

Robin Dropkin, Executive Director of Parks & Trails New York, said, "Wayne County shares a rich Canal heritage with its neighboring areas in Western New York, but its stretch of Canal and Canalway Trail is also unique in terms of local history and biology. This year's Bicyclists Bring Business events will take a new look at cycling's economic impact for the region in the context of other types of outdoor recreation, which is important because of the proximity to the Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge. The ongoing work of Wayne County and local communities to close gaps in the Erie Canalway Trail and make connections to other outdoor recreation opportunities will grow the number of visitors and enhance local quality of life."

The statewide Canalway Trail System attracts cyclists from near and far, and communities along the trail are becoming increasingly aware of the economic opportunities that these visitors provide. According to a 2014 study, the ECT experiences more than 1.58 million visits per year. Spending by ECT visitors annually generates \$253 million in economic impact and \$28.5 million in sales and income taxes and supports 3,440 jobs. The study also found that those who were vacationing on the ECT spent on average \$939 per person per visit and stayed for one to three nights. While overnight visitors represented 18% of the annual visits to the trail, they account for 84% of trail-related spending.

Parks & Trails New York is the state's leading advocate for parks and trails. Since 1998, Parks & Trails New York has been working in partnership with the New York State Canal Corporation to help canal communities plan, develop and promote the Canalway Trail. Parks & Trails New York organizes the Cycle the Erie Canal bike tour, an eight day ride along the historic Erie Canal that attracts more than 650 participants, now in its 18th year, and publishes the popular guidebook, *Cycling the Erie Canal: A Guide to 400 miles of adventure and history along the Erie Canalway Trail*. In 2015, the organization created a new resource, CycletheErieCanal.com, to assist visitors in planning their Canalway Trail adventures and sharing their trail stories. Learn more at www.ptny.org.

When complete, the New York State Canalway Trail System will span more than 500 miles and connect numerous cities, towns, and villages along the Erie, Cayuga-Seneca, Oswego, and Champlain Canals. The backbone of the statewide network, the 360-mile Erie Canalway Trail from Buffalo to Albany, is currently 80% complete as an off-road trail, and will be the longest trail of its kind in the United States when finished.

To learn more about the New York State Canal and Canalway Trail System or to obtain a free map, please call 1-800-4CANAL4 or visit the Canal Corporation's website at www.nyscanals.gov.

For more information on the Erie Canalway Trail, visit www.CycletheErieCanal.com.