



LOCKPORT SINCE 1821 Union-Sun & Journal

NEW YORK STATE: Canal bike tour scheduled

Staff Reports

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— An annual cross-state bicycle tour along the Erie Canal will kick off July 12 from Buffalo, with riders embarking on an eight-day, 400-mile trip to Albany.

The Cycling the Erie Canal event will bring riders through historic canal villages, scenery and rural countryside. Along the way, canal historians and local experts will introduce riders to the people and places important to the Erie Canal and the history of the state.

About 75 percent of the ride is off-road on the traffic-free Canalway Trail. The rest of the trip is on rural roads.

Last year's event brought riders from 38 states, with one-third of them from New York state.

"New Yorkers were as amazed as out-of-staters at the beauty of the Erie Canal corridor, as well as its cultural and historic richness," said Robin Dropkin, ride organizer and executive director of Parks and Trails New York, in a news release.

The ride is open to cyclists of all abilities and ages. Last year, the riders ranged in ages from three to 80. For most days, the route follows the canal along level ground, while for several days in the Finger Lakes, riders tackle a few rolling hills. There are also two long gradual climbs in the Mohawk Valley.

The fee for the ride is \$525 per person, which includes camping accommodations every night with shower and toilet facilities. A half-price rate is available for riders under age 18.

The fee also includes eight breakfasts and six dinners; two daily refreshment stops; entertainment and historical presentations; guided tours of the canal, historic sites, museums and other attractions; a T-shirt and water bottle; baggage transport; daily maps and cue sheets; and marked routes.

Two weekend ride options are also available. The first, from Buffalo to Pittsford, will be held from July 11 to 13; the second, from Canajoharie to Albany, will be held from July 17 to 19.

A shuttle will be available at the beginning of the ride to transport riders and their bicycles to Buffalo.

Non-cycling friends and family of riders with their own transportation are welcome.

"I encourage everyone to sign up to enjoy the unparalleled beauty and history of the New York State Canal System and Canalway Trail," Carmella R. Mantello, Canal Corp. director, said in a news release. "We are pleased to continue our partnership with Parks and Trails New York to support the annual Cycling the Erie Canal tour and to promote the Canalway Trail."

The event is sponsored by the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor.

Other sponsors included CSEA, Wegmans, Panera Bread, Brookfield Power and Terry Precision Cycling.

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