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## NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Bicyclists Bring Business Roundtable and Bike-a-Round in Tonawanda October 14 and 15**

Two events aimed at helping Canalway Trail communities take advantage of the growing bicycle tourist market will be held in the Cities of Tonawanda and North Tonawanda on October 14 and 15.

An evening Bicyclists Bring Business roundtable is scheduled for Tuesday, October 14 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the City of Tonawanda's, Niawanda Park Pavilion, 600 Niagara Street, Tonawanda, NY 14150. The roundtable will focus on how to attract and profit from the area's growing number of bicycle tourists. There will also be time to network with business people and tourism professionals from other communities and enjoy some light refreshments.

Local business people, elected officials, Chambers of Commerce, Tourist Promotion Agencies, and interested citizens are invited to attend. Attendees will receive a copy of Parks & Trails New York's guidebook, "[Bicyclists Bring Business: A Guide for Attracting Bicyclists to New York's Canal Communities.](#)"

As a follow up to the roundtable, on Wednesday, October 15 there will be a Bike-a-Round designed to use the previous evening's presentation as a basis for experiencing the cities of Tonawanda and North Tonawanda and the Erie Canalway/Shoreline Trail by bicycle. Participants will meet at 10:00 a.m., at the Tonawanda Niawanda Park Pavilion Parking Lot. Following the Bike-a-Round, participants will gather over a pay-your-own lunch at Risa and David's Restaurant, 72 Webster Street, North Tonawanda, NY 14120 to discuss the ride and possible solutions to identified issues.

The event is organized by Parks & Trails New York (PTNY) and the New York State Canal Corporation and hosted by Mayor Rick Davis, City of Tonawanda; Mayor Rob Ortt, City of North Tonawanda; Western Erie Canal Alliance; Niagara River Greenway Commission, and GO Bike Buffalo.

Brian U. Stratton, Director of the New York State Canal Corporation, said, "More and more, we are learning just how important our magnificent Canalway Trail is to enhancing both our quality of life and economy across upstate New York. The Canal Corporation was proud to financially underwrite a new PTNY economic impact study that shows the Canalway Trail generates more

than \$250 million in tourism spending. That's why these bicycling workshops are so important, because they help local communities and businesses tap into a huge economic resource."

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Robin Dropkin, Executive Director of Parks & Trails New York, said, "The Canalway Trail Corridor has what it takes to be an attractive destination for the cycling tourist, especially as it follows the Niagara River and the canal in western New York. Impressive historic sites and museums, charming B&B's and inns, and historic communities make this a very charming section of the route. Through the roundtables, we want to help Canalway Trail businesses and communities attract bicyclists and outdoor enthusiasts and thereby increase their share of tourism dollars."

Mayor Rick Davis said "With four major bike trails intersecting here in the City of Tonawanda it would behoove us to explore what we can do to expand our tourism footprint. By attracting people into our downtown business district it helps our businesses thrive and therefore, benefits our city. It really is a win-win for everyone involved. I look forward to sitting down with stakeholders to figure out the best way to take advantage of this growing market."

"The City of North Tonawanda is proud to be located along the Western Gateway to the historic Erie Canal, and the mighty Niagara River. Our community has a lot to offer for everyone of all ages, including a scenic bike route along our waterways. We look forward to being a co-host with the *Bicyclists Bring Business* roundtable and "Bike-A-Round" event so we can discuss the economic benefits that bicyclists can bring to our city," stated Mayor Rob Ortt.

Roxanne T. Kise, Executive Director, Western Erie Canal Alliance said, "WECA is honored to support programs such as Bicyclists Brings Business. What we love about this program is that it provides practical tools to community stakeholders as they work to maximize their current marketable assets as well as real hands on experience to participants. This valuable opportunity allows attendees to bring back to their community's sound marketing suggestions and practices which support existing Main Street business as well as identify possible opportunities for niche business development. This is a well rounded and realistic community economic development program not to be missed."

Drawing more cyclists to the Canalway Trail can have a significant economic impact. According to a recent study conducted by Parks & Trails New York and funded in part by the New York State Canal Corporation and the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, the Erie Canalway Trail (ECT) experiences more than 1.58 million visits per year. Spending by ECT visitors annually generates approximately \$253 million in economic impact and \$28.5 million in sales and income taxes and supports 3,440 jobs in the local economies within the trail corridor. 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 only statewide, non-profit organization dedicated to preserving and expanding a network of parks, greenways, and trails for all New Yorkers to enjoy. 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 Cycling the Erie Canal, the highly successful 400-mile, eight day bike tour, now in its 17<sup>th</sup> year, that annually attracts more than 500 participants to ride from Buffalo to Albany, and publishes the popular 144-page guidebook, *Cycling the Erie Canal: A Guide to 400 miles of adventure and history along the Erie Canalway Trail*.

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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, making it one of the longest multi-use recreational trails in the country.

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

Roundtable space is limited. Reservations are required for the Bike-a-Round. All bicyclists must wear a helmet. RSVP to Parks & Trails New York at [B3roundtable@ptny.org](mailto:B3roundtable@ptny.org) or by calling 518-434-1583 by October 10.

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