



November 27, 2007

Mr. Paul Francis
Director of the Budget and
Special Advisor to the Governor
State Capitol
Executive Chamber
Albany, NY 12224

Subject: Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor Commission (MVHCC) support for our 'sister' organization the Western Erie Canal Heritage Corridor

Dear Director Francis:

Regional heritage areas along the Erie Canal are an important part of economic revitalization, tourism promotion, recreation development and resource conservation in Upstate New York. On the eastern end of the canal, the Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor Commission serves eight counties stretching from the Hudson River to Oneida Lake. In the west, the Western Erie Canal Alliance oversees the Western Erie Canal Heritage Corridor, a five-county region that reaches from the Montezuma Swamp to the Niagara River.

Together these regional New York State Heritage Areas are seeking funding from the 2008 State Budget to support their programs and core operating costs. State Heritage Areas are part of the NYS Department of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, but have never received regular funding through the state budget.

There is no doubt that New York State needs significant additional revenues in the short and long term. Heritage Tourism and the restoration of our world-class historical and cultural assets need to be used to generate that revenue. You will need organizations on the ground that are experienced and have the requisite skills to revitalize these towns and villages. We are your hands-on organization as Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor is in the eastern end of Upstate NY.

The funding request of **\$200,000** by the Western Erie Canal Alliance will help pay for key staff and facilities, and allow the organization to broaden its Main Street Revitalization Program, initiated with a grant from the NYS Department of State Quality Communities Program.

We are making great strides and I'd like to now work with you take us to full and permanent status. And with an annual budget that reflects what we do and can do in this 6,000 square mile region.

We have the full support of both sides of the legislature. Assembly leaders such as Ron Canestrari, RoAnn Destito, Paul Tonko, Jack McEneny and others sponsored our recent 5-year extension. The Senate support is broad and lead by Senators Bruno, Farley, Seward and Griffo. Our 2007 extension legislation passed unanimously in both houses.

The purpose of this letter is to ask you to take measures to get MVHCC in front of the Director of the Budget and present our case for permanent status with appropriate annual budget.

The idea is to simply present our accomplishments and our potential to the Senate and ask that you create and support appropriate legislation **in the upcoming session for a permanent and fully funded commission**. We believe that we should be replicated on the **Tug Hill Commission model**. They are significantly smaller than MVHCC (2,000 square miles, 50 communities, 4 counties) versus MVHCC having 6,000 square miles, 8 counties and 203 communities. Tug Hill is a wonderful commission and I have been to Watertown and met with the Executive Director and staff. I know that they have a permanent line under Department of State and they are funded at over \$1 million per year. They have 21 employees – MVHCC has 4. They have professional office space in the state office-building complex in Watertown – we rent a small old office over a dentist office in Canajoharie.

They state in their annual reports that they deliver in excess of a \$10 million return on that investment. MVHCC could do significantly more as we are more strategically located and have the massive built in assets like Saratoga National Battlefield, Ft. Stanwix National Monument, Erie Canal, Native American history and so much more. We are at the crossroads of I 87 and I 90, and have a magnificent heritage base and can do the job. In 10 years we have in fact proven our value many times over.

OPRHP Commissioner Carol Ash has said that MVHCC is outstanding in the leadership we offer for all New York State heritage areas. We continue to work together on numerous projects that benefit this state. Our work on Gillette House in Schenectady, the Village of Canajoharie, and the Village of Dolgeville as just three examples, has been recognized as extraordinary. DHCR Commissioner Deborah VanAmerongen has publicly said that MVHCC does innovative and extraordinary work in community revitalization. Ag & Markets Commissioner Pat Hooker has seen our work and has reached out his hand in partnership.

There are obvious challenges in revitalizing the upstate economy. I have had discussions with Dan Gundersen at Empire State Development Corporation and his staff. They like what we bring to the table. Same with Commissioner VanAmerongen at DHCR. They see the innovative way that we bring Turnkey solutions to any municipality and get things done quickly and efficiently.

MVHCC is the organization on the ground, which deals with local mayors and town supervisors and boards. In partnership with ESDC, DHCR, PSC, and other state agencies, we can seriously make positive change from the Hudson River to Buffalo.

The easiest and most effective way to get this done is to create MVHCC in identical form as Tug Hill Commission with similar annual budget and permanency under a state agency like Department of State so that we bring power and continuity to the many complex issues facing our upstate communities. We are requesting \$1.2 million annually and permanent placement in the Executive Budget in this session. We will return this investment 3-1 as we always do.

We are mature and successful and now need to put this commission in place to deliver major economic value to this superb region. The staff and commissioners are ready to do what it takes to get this done in this session of the legislature.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fred Miller", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Fred Miller
Executive Director

Ref: 1998 Tug Hill legislation is: A 10368/S6476



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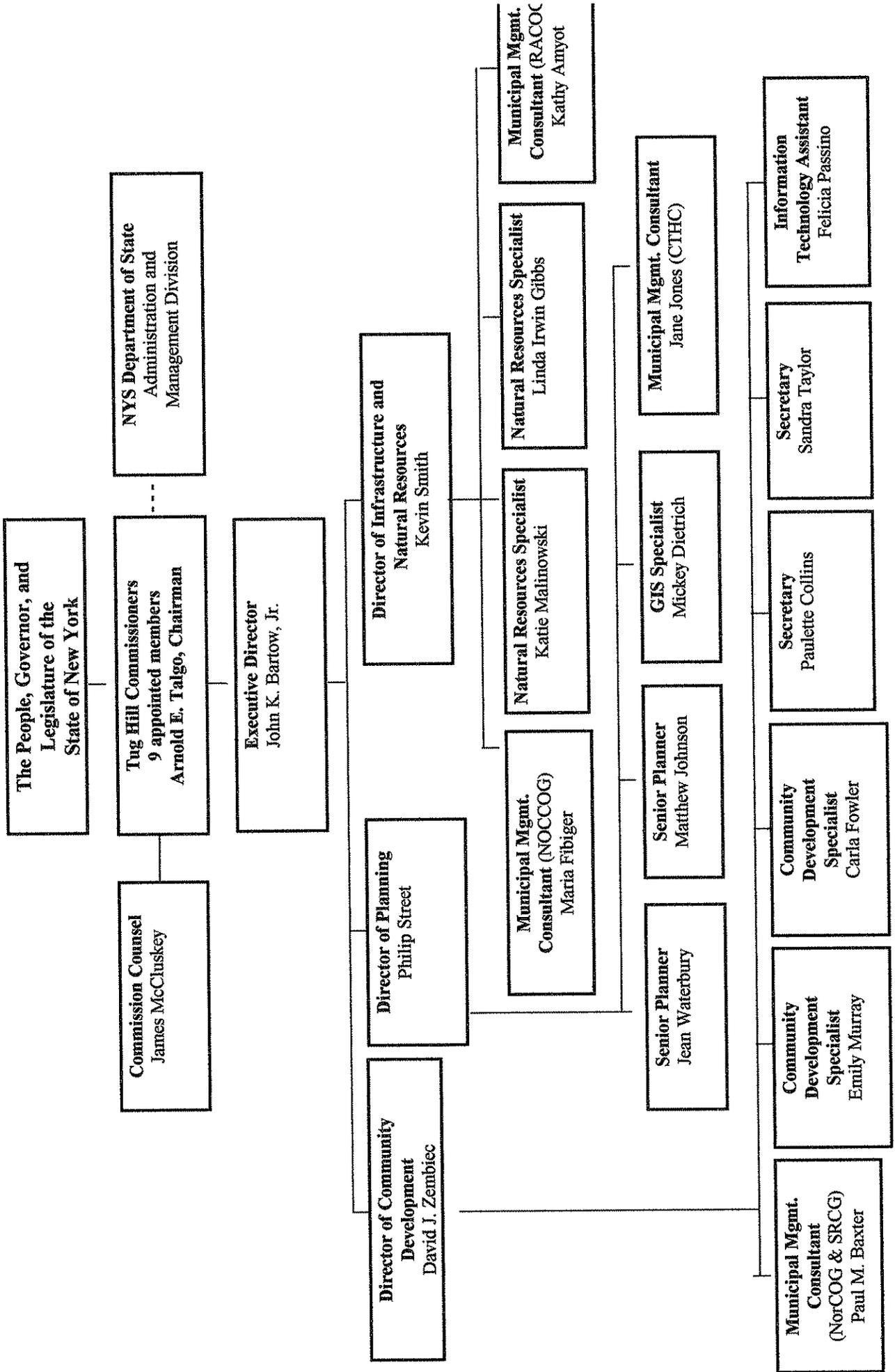
As an Advocate as a companion Regional Heritage Corridor covering the many communities in the Western Erie Canal Heritage Corridor, I would like to express our support for this funding request and urge you to include it in your 2008 Budget. I am also able to make Western Erie Canal leaders available to present their request in person if desired.

Respectfully,

Frederick E. Miller,
Executive Director

TUG HILL COMMISSION

Organization Chart - July 2005



**Tug Hill Commission
Fiscal Year 2004-2005
(April 1, 2004 - March 31, 2005)**

**Budget
March 2, 2005**

	Budgeted 2004-2005	Amended 2004-2005
REVENUE		
Appropriation	\$966,000	\$1,041,000
Special Revenue	\$48,750	\$45,000
Local Government Conference	\$11,000	\$11,000
Legislative Initiative	\$0	\$40,000
Miscellaneous	\$500	\$4,700
TOTAL INCOME	\$1,026,250	\$1,141,700
EXPENSES		
Salary	\$876,000	\$894,000
Non-Salary:		
Consultants/Contracts (1)	\$6,000	\$29,000
Boards/Agencies	\$16,400	\$8,900
Travel	\$25,000	\$25,000
Printing	\$4,000	\$2,400
Office Supplies	\$13,500	\$13,500
Phone	\$16,000	\$15,000
Postage	\$8,000	\$8,000
Postage Machine	\$3,000	\$3,000
Photocopy Contract	\$2,200	\$2,200
Office Equipment	\$500	\$500
Computer Equipment (2)	\$15,000	\$92,000
Training	\$4,500	\$7,500
Miscellaneous Commission Expenses	\$8,000	\$10,000
Local Gov. Conference	\$18,000	\$18,000
Unallocated	\$10,150	\$0
Total Non-Salary Expenses	\$150,250	\$235,000
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$1,026,250	\$1,129,000

(1) Additional \$20,000 for CTHC (ATV study) and \$3,000 for consultant work on network upgrade to enterprising software.

(2) Includes \$7,000 for web-based GIS.

MVHCC Return on Investment 2000-2005

Grants made to MVHCC by NYS Legislature 2000-2006:

Assembly	1,555,000	
Senate	950,000	2,505,000
<u>Funds MVHCC helped to generate for region:</u>		
Federal		
HUD 2003	178,830	
NPS	4,000	
NPS	10,000	
NPS	2,500	195,330
Project grants:		
Herkimer Port TEP	1,100,000	
BOCES teachers	1,900,000	
EPF kiosks	243,000	
Western Frontier/NYCH++	35,500	
Little Italy conference	28,700	
Nellis Tavern	20,000	
Niagara Mohawk	2,000	
Walmart - Canajoharie trees	1,200	
NY Folklore	1,000	
Canal Corp kiosks	90,000	\$3,421,400
Community Grants:		
Canajoharie Small Cities	1,950,000	
Dolgeville Small Cities	250,000	
Dolgeville Main St	200,000	
SUNY students Canajoharie	60,000	
Little Falls HUD kiosks	53,700	
Canajoharie HUD facades	12,600	\$2,526,300
Contracts:		
Schenectady Co (Gillette)	303,000	
DOT Scenic Byway contracts	163,000	
Towpath Trail Scenic Byway	92,000	\$558,000
Events, Sales & Services:		
Heritage Heroes	21,155	
ECL Book sales	24,100	
Landmarks	5,000	
Sale of services	1,000	
Contributions	6,000	57,255
Total income leveraged:		\$6,524,200*
Total investment in region:		\$9,029,200
* No credit taken for residual benefits in the region		

Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor Commission
66 Montgomery Street
Canajoharie, NY 13317
www.mvhcc.org

November, 2007

Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor Commission (MVHCC) Recent accomplishments and Work in Progress

- 1.) MVHCC is restoring the downtown core of Canajoharie and administratively completing a Main Street program in Dolgeville. On September 20, 2007 Canajoharie was awarded another Small Cities grant for \$650,000, which allows us to continue the entire village facade restoration. These are grants worth hundreds of thousands of dollars and we are supporting others. This goes with our core philosophy that we need clean, vibrant villages across the region in order to do heritage tourism correctly and with results. So we are winning grants, doing the restoration work full-cycle and handing it back to the municipalities. Then we have attractive, historic villages that visitors can enjoy.**
- 2.) We have now completed the funding cycle and received 100% of the \$400,000 grant from State Education Dept to guide and provide oversight for a world class PBS documentary on Benedict Arnold - the American General side of the story. Much filming is complete and this will change Rev War tourism forever. You can see a clip by going to www.talonfilms.com and clicking on AG. There are new segments shot this summer and more sites were filmed this fall in Herkimer, Rome, Albany and Johnstown. Remarkable work.**
- 3.) Our web site is in the process of being reworked. We are currently in phase one and will continue to be worked on www.mvhcc.org.**
- 4.) MVHCC is working on an AMTRAK rail package with NPS and others to get visitors here by rail and get them inland. Almost done strategically, however much logistic work to do yet. This is a major project that can deliver NYC visitors to the region on a regular basis and will generate serious revenue for the state and especially the Mohawk, Hudson and Champlain Valley's.**
- 5.) Preservation of individual buildings and places is always needed so we do it. We are personally working on several requests for help and have started the very historic 'clock tower' in Ft. Plain. Recently, the Village of Waterville in Oneida County has formally requested our assistance in helping with downtown revitalization.**

6.) **MVHC/DHCR/CPC Flood Relief Program.** In August of 2006, the state asked MVHCC to head up a multi-million Flood Relief program. MVHCC has 5 counties in our relief program; Montgomery, Herkimer, Schoharie, Oneida and even Otsego County. We are delivering money, aiding 100 + distressed owners and getting this region back on its feet. We have delivered over \$2 million in cash grants in 10 months. We are 95% complete and as funding runs out at the state level, we will close down the operation in about 2 months.

7.) **MVHC recently completed the Management Plan for the Revolutionary Trail Scenic Byway,** which cover the span of 165 miles from Waterford on the Hudson to Port Ontario in Oswego County. This very complex project will eventually lead to one of America's best scenic byways and link the Seaway Trail and Lakes to Locks Passage to form the best triangle of Historic Scenic Byway Trails in America. The Trail name is now Waterways, Wars, Wheels, & Woman. A new brochure has been designed and printed. Maps and materials are being delivered to the various Local Action Committees along the trail to get them back into motion.

8.) **MVHCC has been requested by the Glove Theater in Gloversville, Fulton County to assist with development planning.** Meetings with the Director and Board members in the past 4 weeks have provided them with guidance in preparing their management plan. We are also working to create a Mohawk Valley alliance between Theater organizations such as Proctors and Stanley to shorten the learning curve.

✱ 9.) **MVHCC has been asked by the Public Service Commission to formally get involved with the approval process of alternative energy projects especially Wind Farms in Herkimer County.** E/D continues to be active in discussions with all parties regarding this matter.

10.) **WESTERN FRONTIER SYMPOSIUM "Agents of Change in Colonial New York: Sir William Johnson's World"**

Two years of planning by a consortium of historic sites led by MVHC brought 400 people to an October 20-21 symposium on the Mohawk Valley in the time of Sir William Johnson. Noted historians flew in from South Carolina, California, Canada and Ireland to share their research and brought media attention to the early history of our region. We are still analyzing the attendance figures but can already tell you that almost half came from over an hour away to attend the presentations. Others came from Virginia, Ohio, Canada, and a local resident now living in Shanghai actually flew back to attend.

New York Council for Humanities funding allowed the sessions to be open to the public free of charge and many locals took advantage of that option. Fifty teachers signed up for a special teachers resource package. A corresponding exhibit "Re-Envisioning History" brought the work of five artists of national reputation to the FMCC Perrella Art Gallery where it is still being used by FMCC classes and visitors for the rest of this month. The six historic sites participating in the book

store sold over \$6,700 worth of stock (about half of that came from the speaker's books alone). The Sunday Open House Tour of sites featured over twenty sites across the region. The headquarters hotel, Johnstown's Holiday Inn, was completely sold out for the weekend. More details on the economic impact of this event will be posted soon.

11.) Recommended reading this month:

a.) Benedict Arnold's Navy by James L. Nelson – a wonderful and detailed story about the remarkable creation of a ragtag fleet that took on the British Navy on Lake Champlain in 1776.

b.) Mohawk Region Waterfall Guide by Russell Dunn and Daniel Driscoll: From the Capital District to Cooperstown & Syracuse: The Mohawk and Schoharie Valleys, Helderbergs and Leatherstocking Country.

These are just highlights. We work daily with many communities and sites to provide technical and administrative assistance on numerous matters.

Fred Miller, Executive Director



OFFICE OF
MAYOR

659 E. Main Street
Little Falls, New York 13365

Office: (315) 823-0001 Fax: (315) 823-0580

Hon. Theodore S. Wind
Mayor

Home: (315) 823-1612

October 15, 2007

received
10/18/07

Mr. Frederick E. Miller
Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor Comm.
66 Montgomery St.
Canajoharie, NY 13317

Mr. Miller,

Enclosed you will find a copy of a DVD that Little Falls has completed to help promote our City. We trust that you will take the time to view the DVD and also share it with anyone that you feel that might enjoy and benefit from it. We would ask that you consider and provide us with any feed back on how the DVD could be used to further promote and benefit the City of Little Falls.

The city would also like to take this opportunity to thank you for your part in helping us to accomplish the many projects that we have completed in our community and to continue to work with us to expand on the many resources we have to offer. Our City is proud of our past and optimistic about our future and look to your expertise on helping us to fulfill our goals and objectives. Little Falls has been ear marked as a community on the Canal Corridor that has potential for growth and prosperity and we will continue to do our part to make this happen

Once again, please enjoy the DVD and thank you for your part in our success.

Sincerely,

Theodore S. Wind
Mayor of Little Falls

kma

The Village Improvement Society
of Gilbertsville, N.Y., Inc.

P.O. Box 61
Gilbertsville, N.Y. 13776

July 5, 2007



Fred Miller, Exec. Director
The Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor
66 Montgomery Street
Canajoharie, NY 13317

Dear Mr. Miller:

Once again I find myself thanking you for your recent generous award of a grant to cover work that has been done on the Gilbert Block. I am sure you are aware the Gilbert Block is the focus of our small village and the ravages of last year's flood have been, in large measure, corrected due to the generosity of your organization and the State of New York.

The Village Improvement Society's board has been engaged primarily in flood related repairs to this point. However, in that process a number of other issues have been identified that require attention. It is only through organizations like yours that we will be able to do the necessary work to save the Gilbert Block.

On behalf of the board and the community at large, let me express our sincere thanks for your generosity and support.

Sincerely,

Allen Anderson
President Village Improvement Society
PO Box 61
Gilbertsville, NY 13776

N.Y. history front and center at FMCC

This region is full of history, and the mission of the Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor Commission, created in the late 1990s, is to stimulate its economy by focusing on that history. Over the years the MVHCC has done some good work and come up with some good ideas, none of them better than the Western Frontier Symposium, to be held this weekend at Fulton-Montgomery Community College.

Four hundred participants are expected (twice as many as when the event was first held two years ago), with more than 100 of them from outside the region. Thus the conference itself will have an economic impact; and the attention it will generate and base of scholarly information it will create should translate into more visitors in the future.

The subject of the 2005 symposium was the large plantations of the region. This time it will be Sir William Johnson, a fascinating, larger-than-life figure who Rachel Bliven, head of regional cultural interpretation for the MVHCC, calls a mix between Colin Powell (international war hero), Henry Kissinger (master negotiator) and Donald Trump (entrepreneur and huckster). Five well-known writers/scholars will be on hand from places like Ireland, Canada and Charleston, experts on Johnson, the French and Indian War and Colonial upstate New York.

The weekend will feature lectures, exhibits and an 18th century dinner, as well as tours of preserved historic sites from the period, including Johnson Hall, the Schuyler Mansion in Albany and Fort Crailo in Rensselaer.

The symposium (open to the public free of charge) comes at a good time: It's the 250th anniversary commemoration of the French and Indian War, and the New York State Library is in the midst of a project where it is digitizing 14 volumes of Johnson's letters and records, which will make them much more accessible to scholars, students, history buffs and others. By making history come alive, the MVHCC is doing its job of making cultural tourism in upstate New York more attractive.

Gazette
7-13-07

Train riders to see valley's sights

Tourists from NYC targeted

BY DANIEL DEVRIES
Gazette Reporter

Bringing tourists from New York City to the Capital Region for historic sightseeing could become the biggest endeavor of the Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor Commission, its director said this week.

MVHCC Executive Director Fred Miller said the proposal, dubbed the "Heritage Train," aims to partner with Amtrak to bring visitors from the city to the Mohawk Valley for a three-, five- or seven-day tour of local historic sites and attractions.

"We have more sites, more stories and more anything than anywhere in America," Miller said. "What we don't have is an orchestrated program to bring people to those sites."

While the tourism program is still in its infancy, Miller said the commission is hoping to start the first trips in 2008, and they are now working out details of what historic sites will be included, where people will eat and what hotels people will stay at.

"With fast trains these days, we're going to push the slow train, where you're not worried about your watch," Miller said.

Visitors on the train would be seated in a designated car that would include a guide to inform tourists about the history of locations along the journey. Miller said the idea is to make history come alive and to promote the wealth of historic sites throughout the region.

Tracy Montoni, the commission's manager of heritage tourism, said she is now working to put all the details together for the trips. She said the idea of a heritage train was born out of Amtrak's program of providing guides on select trips on its Maple Leaf run from Albany to Canada.

"We're in the process of doing the strategic plan for it," Montoni said. "This was a natural progression, a train tour... connecting downstate with upstate and taking into consideration the interpreters. It makes it easier for people to just get onboard the train. With gas now and prices the way they are, it makes it stress-free."

Miller said the plan is to bring tourists to Albany, and from there they could go to a number of historic sites in Saratoga and then west out toward Utica on the train.

And although nothing is finalized, including the price and length of trips, Montoni said the commis-

See **TRAINS**, page A4

Gazette
Sept 13, 2007
(Front Page)

Trains

Continued from page A1

sion is working on incorporating several options for visitors along the way.

Part of the plan is to give visitors alternatives where they can decide to take a bike tour along the Erie Canal or take a bus tour to historic sites that are not adjacent to the canal or train tracks.

"We do have some very wonderful, wonderful attractions, and the history itself is just amazing," Montoni said. "It's very authentic, what we have. I think most of all, the valley — one of the best assets is its beauty."

The MVHCC receives funding

from a number of state and federal agencies and is responsible for promoting history and community development along the Mohawk Valley. The commission has been responsible for overseeing several grants for redevelopment of Canajoharie's downtown and working to extend the state Canalway bike trail in recent years.

Montoni said she plans on coordinating with multiple state agencies, including the New York State Canal Corp., state parks and private motor coach companies to put the tours together.

"There's going to be a lot of different of people to connect with," she said.

Reach Gazette reporter
Daniel DeVries at 843-2830 or
ddevries@dailygazette.net.

VILLAGE of CANAJOHARIE

Ronald O. Dievendorf, Mayor
75 ERIE BOULEVARD
CANAJOHARIE, NEW YORK 13317
518-673-5512 FAX 518-673-5517

Jeffrey Baker, Trustee
Veronica Hicks, Trustee

Thomas D. Grainer, Trustee
F. Garth MacFarland, Trustee

January 7, 2006

Senator Hugh T. Farley
44th Senatorial District
Legislative Office Building, Rm 412
Albany NY 12247

Dear Senator Farley:

Thank-you for your expression of concern when I had my stroke. You cannot know how much I appreciated cards like yours in the uncertain days and weeks following my incapacitation. I am not able to resume my duties yet, but I wanted very much to comment about Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor Commission efforts to develop a tourism based economy, but even more so for the revitalization efforts of Canajoharie.

Canajoharie is partnered with the Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor Commission for collaboration and assistance in planning and implementation of joint projects. Those projects include promotion, development of heritage and recreational sites, and planning and technical assistance. Heritage Corridor administered our 2004 Governor's Office for Small Cities façade program, bringing management and professional resources in historic preservation to produce an innovative, community based façade program, not unlike the services provided by MVHCC for the Gillette House in Schenectady. The four businesses that received grant moneys are the first in the demonstration program. GOSC financed a further round for \$250,000, which will enable us to make substantial progress in downtown rehabilitation in anticipation of the opening of the Arkell Art Museum. MVHCC will again be managing the new grant.

MVHCC is completing interpretive signs for the Village explaining why Canajoharie has always been a catalyst for progress in the Mohawk Valley. The Heritage Corridor obtained and facilitated a Graduate School Planning Studio program with the SUNY University at Albany Urban and Regional Planning Program. And then went out and raised the \$9500 from mainly private sources, to bring this state of the art planning expertise to us. This program, directed by SUNY professors and 16 graduate students, provided an overview of our community needs and strengths, an evaluation of the success of our planning and rehabilitation efforts, and a template for a regional approach for tourism development, with a focus on Canajoharie. Because of the enthusiasm

engendered by the SUNY students, we are developing a comprehensive plan for the next decade. (Your legislative grant financed the village's share of that SUNY expense).

As have many communities in the northeast, Canajoharie has suffered from downsized or closed manufacturing operations. The "rustbelt" Mohawk Valley region had fallen on hard economic times, losing population, small businesses and jobs, and our pride. But Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor is changing all that!

By recognizing the immense opportunity that cultural, historical and recreational tourism offers, Heritage Corridor works as a catalyst to effectively market the Mohawk Valley region (as with their magazine, the Herkimer Port Marina, grants for Dolgeville (\$200,000 won by MVHCC to revitalize them) and others. I have seen them organize major programs like the Western Frontier Conference at FMCC, The Italian Heritage Program at Rome, and more. The world class visitors center at Ft. Stanwix was in their original management plan and it is now in business and it is magnificent. They joined forces with Capital District BOCES, Union College, the New York Historical Society and successfully helped win a \$909,000 multi-year grant in 2003 from the U.S. Department of Education. This will allow for the development of Master Teachers for the restoration of American History learning in our classrooms. These and other motivational and leadership programs breathe new life into our communities. Their work is important and essential to the survival of small towns and cities along the canal. We depend on them for access to the NY Main Street program administered by the Department of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR). The Commission advances the cooperation between communities that otherwise would not occur. They do it quietly but very effectively and we all understand that.

The Commission's work is important and essential to the survival of small towns and cities along the canal. We all need their efforts.

I am asking for your help to assure a future for MVHCC, and ultimately, for Canajoharie's future. Thank you for your attention and assistance in this regard.

Very truly,

Ronald O. Dievendorf
Mayor

Cc: Fred Miller