

New York State Thruway Authority
New York State Canal Corporation
Annual Highlights - 2015

Overview

New York State Thruway Authority (NYSTA)

The 570-mile New York State Thruway, operated by the Thruway Authority, has served as the central artery of the state's transportation system for nearly six decades. In 2015, more than 255 million motorists traveled more than eight billion vehicle-miles on the Thruway system.

The Thruway is renowned for being among the safest and most reliable superhighway systems in the country. Throughout the history of the system, toll revenues have been the primary source of funds to support Thruway operations, maintenance and capital investments.

New York State Canal Corporation

The Thruway Authority has operated and maintained the historic New York State Canal system since 1992, and the Canal Corporation operates as a subsidiary of the Thruway Authority. The system is comprised of four historic canals -- the Erie, Champlain, Oswego and Cayuga-Seneca. Spanning 524 miles, the waterways link the Hudson River, Lake Champlain, Lake Ontario, the Finger Lakes, Niagara River and Lake Erie with communities rich in history and culture.

The Canal system also includes the Erie Canalway Trail, a 360-mile multi-purpose, shared use path which brings important economic, public health, tourism and quality of life benefits to more than 3.7 million New Yorkers living within the 14 counties where the trail is located. The Trail is about 80 percent complete, and when the final sections open it will be the longest continuous intrastate multi-use trail in the nation.

The Canal System today has many benefits beyond its recreational use. Throughout upstate New York, communities, businesses, industries and farming operations rely on the Canal system for its abundant and reliable supply of water. For example, the Canal system currently supports 27 hydroelectric facilities that make up approximately nine percent of the state's hydroelectric facilities producing an estimated 2.3 percent of the state's hydroelectric power. Despite changing technologies, the Canal system remains relevant in today's world and New York's economy.

Thruway and Canals by the Numbers

- **Four new miles** of Canalway trail completed, increasing the trail between Albany and Buffalo to 291 miles
- **50,179** special hauling permits issued to oversize and overweight vehicles
- More than **33 million visitors** to the Thruway's 27 travel plazas
- **284,107 square feet** of highway pavement repaired
- More than **72 million gallons** of gasoline and diesel fuel sold at Thruway travel plazas
- **44,302** roadside service calls received by the Thruway Statewide Operations Center
- **62,294 square feet** of material used to fabricate **49,198** new road, trail and waterway signs
- **187,955 tons** of salt and **325,989 gallons** of anti-icing agents applied during winter maintenance season
- **246,599 staff hours** spent and **1,564,099 miles** traveled conducting snow and ice operations
- **27,823 staff hours** spent performing landscape maintenance, including tree and brush removal, growth control and rock/earth slope repair

- More than **147,000 tickets** issued by New York State Police Troop T, including:
 - **73,586** for speeding
 - **4,955** for cell phone usage
 - **1,585** for texting while driving
- **10,565** accidents investigated
- **2,679** criminal and **997** DWI **arrests** made by Troop T

Average Customer Wait Time for Thruway Roadside Assistance

Safety of motorists on the Thruway system is of paramount concern. Disabled vehicles that are in need of roadside assistance are a safety hazard and must be removed as quickly as possible. While a number of factors outside the Thruway Authority’s control can affect the amount of time to respond (e.g., traffic, weather and the distance between the failure and the nearest authorized garage), ensuring that contracted tow operators are dispatched and respond to disabled vehicles quickly improves the safety of the Thruway. In 2015, the average wait time was 31 minutes.

2016 Target: The Thruway Authority has set a goal of reducing the average time between when a tow operator is informed of a call for assistance and the arrival of that assistance to no greater than 30 minutes.

Motor Vehicle Fatalities on the Thruway System

Motor vehicle fatalities are one of the primary measures of road safety. New York State’s Strategic Highway Safety Plan outlines elements that include engineering, education, and enforcement actions, with a focus for the Thruway Authority on system safety engineering. The Thruway Authority has replaced approximately 75 percent of the standard pavement striping line along the roadway with a Recessed Triple Drop system to provide greater visibility in all lighting and weather conditions especially in wet and/or nighttime conditions; installed state-of-the-art Doppler-radar-enhanced LED signs to help prevent wrong-way drivers (signs have been installed at four interchanges during 2015 and by the end of 2016, signs will be installed at an additional 14 interchanges); and, instituted a sign replacement program that ensures minimum retro-reflectivity levels are met or exceeded throughout the life of the sign. In 2015, there were 27 fatalities on the Thruway.

2016 Target: The Thruway Authority is continually working towards a goal of zero motor vehicle fatalities.

New NY Bridge Project

Construction Update

The New NY Bridge project continues its advance towards the opening of both spans in 2018. The \$3.98 billion project – the largest bridge or highway project in North America – reached significant construction milestones in 2015. Progress includes the placement of the first sections of concrete road deck panels for the twin crossing and the massive steel blue girder assemblies reaching the one mile point from the Rockland shoreline.

Tappan Zee Constructors has used more than 660 subcontractors and suppliers based in New York State, providing a significant economic boost in the lower Hudson Valley along with the rest of the state as envisioned by Governor Cuomo.

Construction of the eight iconic main span towers for the cable-stayed crossing began in August 2015 and each will stand 419-feet above the Hudson River by the end of 2016.

Looking ahead, cashless tolling for the Tappan Zee Bridge is scheduled to launch during the spring of 2016. The installation of cables and the laying of road deck panels for the main span

towers will also begin as preparations are made to shift traffic from the Tappan Zee Bridge to the new northbound span anticipated in 2017.

Since the beginning, the project team has held more than 730 meetings with the public, including 215 in 2015. The educational outreach team has reached more than 25,000 students.

Information on the New NY Bridge project can be found at www.newnybridge.com and on its Twitter account, @NewNYBridge. In addition, the project can be found on Instagram at www.instagram.com/newnybridge.

New NY Bridge by the numbers (as of Dec. 17, 2015)

- 99 percent of overall design complete;
- 62 percent of concrete piers are completed;
- 61 percent of steel girders have been fabricated;
- 38 percent of the deck panels have been produced;
- 33 percent of girder assemblies placed; and,
- 27 percent of the main towers poured.

Protecting the Environment

In construction as well as design, the New NY Bridge team has worked diligently to reduce the environmental impacts associated with the project. From the start, the project has been designed to protect the Hudson River while seeking to mitigate noise to residents of local communities through a combination of state-of-the-art technology, community outreach and leading-edge construction techniques.

Environmental accomplishments for the project during 2015 include the following:

- Completed the second stage of dredging ahead of schedule. Throughout the project, dredging had been limited to a three-month period to avoid interrupting the spawning and migration patterns of endangered sturgeon;
- Completed tagging and tracking of approximately 120 of the river's ancient species of endangered shortnose and Atlantic sturgeon to help researchers learn more about their habits and behavior;
- Concluded the mapping of the shallows of the Hudson River from Saugerties to New York Harbor to help researchers learn more about the Hudson River bottom and fish habitats;
- Worked with the Hudson River Foundation, the NY Harbor School, Cornell University, Scenic Hudson, Riverkeeper, NY/NJ Baykeeper, National Marine Fisheries Service and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to install test materials to determine the "what and where" of the oyster restoration program, to be constructed when the project is nearing completion; and,
- Nine communities near the project applied for \$1.5 million in funding to improve their waterfronts. Awards will be given in the spring of 2016.

Capital Projects and Construction Contracts

To help the Thruway Authority balance the needs of its extensive interstate highway and bridge network, an innovative and comprehensive asset management program was developed. This program enables us to use extensive data about pavement and bridge conditions, accident profiles, frequent flooding zones, historical capital investments, and other important elements of our 570-mile superhighway system to prioritize capital projects and determine the most cost-effective and efficient ways to complete those projects.

The Thruway Authority uses sophisticated analytical methods and mathematical models that

consider factors such as traffic volume trends, location, construction history and design, along with extensive data on current conditions, to identify and shape priority projects and to predict when maintenance, rehabilitation or other construction will be needed at locations throughout the Thruway system.

In 2015, the Thruway Authority opened bids for 29 projects worth a total of \$112.2 million generating approximately 2,690 direct, indirect and induced jobs. These projects included:

LOCATION	PROJECT	Construction Cost
Pavement resurfacing on I-90 from east of Silver Creek (milepost 455.2) to Dunkirk (Exit 59, milepost 467.0) and Interchange 58	Pavement Resurfacing	\$11,728,326
Pavement resurfacing on I-87 from south of New Paltz (milepost 74.5 to south of Kingston (milepost 86.8)	Pavement Resurfacing	\$10,303,886
Pavement resurfacing on I-87 from north of Garden State Connector (milepost 24.1) to Sloatsburg/Suffern/Route 17 (Exit 15A, milepost 31.4)	Pavement Resurfacing	\$9,097,296
Pavement resurfacing on I-87 from south of Saugerties (milepost 100.8) to north of Saugerties (milepost 109.3)	Pavement Resurfacing	\$8,106,924
Rehabilitation of Movable Dam 18 at May's Point, Seneca County	Movable Dam Rehabilitation	\$7,198,216
Pavement resurfacing on I-90 Waterloo (Exit 41, milepost 320.7) to Geneva (Exit 42, milepost 327.5)	Pavement Resurfacing	\$7,140,001
Painting of 19 Syracuse Division Bridges	Bridge Painting	\$5,669,650
Painting of 10 Buffalo Division Bridges	Bridge Painting	\$5,375,312
Replacement of South Newstead Rd Bridge over I-90 milepost 407.27)	Bridge Replacement	\$4,868,001
Rehabilitation of 3 I-90/I-190 Interchange Bridges and Wherle Drive Bridge over Thruway in Erie County	Bridge Rehabilitation	\$4,385,684
Rehabilitation of the Brewerton North Dock Wall, Oswego County	Dock Wall Rehabilitation	\$2,924,961

Enhanced Services and Attractions for Thruway Motorists

Port Byron Erie Canal Heritage Park

On May 28, 2014, the Canal Corporation announced construction of the Port Bryon Erie Canal Heritage Park, part of Governor Cuomo's *Path Through History* initiative and developed in conjunction with the Canal Society of New York State. The Park will be the first-of-its-kind facility to offer access directly from the Thruway to a historic site. Phase one of the park includes a parking area with entrance and exit ramps off the Thruway. The parking area was completed in the spring of 2015 and provides access to the enlarged Erie Canal Lock 52, which was constructed in the 1850s. Phases two and three of the project are underway and expected to be completed in the fall of 2016. Phase two will entail the restoration of the Erie House complex, which dates back to 1895, and includes the Erie House Tavern and Hotel, a mule barn and black smith shop while phase three will include construction of a parking lot accessible from Route 31, the Visitor's Center with historical information, and additional trails connecting the entire site.

Lock E-13 Living History Rest Area

Construction continued on the new rest area that will be located along one of the most scenic sections of the Erie Canal and Mohawk River. It represents a physical connection of the two transportation corridors that helped build the Empire State – the Erie Canal and the New York State Thruway. The facility will include a small visitor's center with interpretive displays, recreational areas and a dedicated truck parking lot. The Thruway Authority is also working with the Department of Agriculture and Markets to install a Taste NY sales area at the Lock 13 Living History Rest Area. Travelers will be able to access the rest area from the Thruway heading westbound. The facility is scheduled to be open to the public in spring of 2016.

Taste NY

The Thruway Authority expanded upon the Taste NY initiative that was designed by Governor Andrew Cuomo to highlight and promote products that are grown and produced in New York State. This program is a key component of the plan to grow New York industries, create jobs and increase New York tourism. Twenty-one new sign panels relating to Taste NY along the Thruway system were installed. A wide variety of Taste NY products highlighting New York's food and beverage industry can be found at all 27 service areas along the Thruway. In addition to providing motorists the opportunity to sample some of the locally grown produce from New York's farms, 18 service areas hosted Taste NY farmers markets in 2015.

Environmental Stewardship

Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

As part of Governor Cuomo's Charge NY initiative, the Thruway Authority partnered with the New York Power Authority to install high-speed electric vehicle (EV) charging stations enabling fast-charge-capable EVs to be powered in approximately 30 minutes at four service areas in the Hudson Valley. These stations are located on I-87 northbound at the Plattekill and Malden Service Areas, between exits 17 (Newburgh) and 21 (Catskill) and on I-87 southbound at the Ulster and Modena Service Areas between exits 20 (Saugerties) and 17 (Newburgh). The charging stations are each capable of supplying up to 50 kilowatts of power to an electric vehicle and support both of the standard connectors – Chademo and SAE Combo. Charging stations were installed December 2015 and operational January 2016.

New York State Pollinator Task Force

In 2015, Governor Cuomo formed the New York State Pollinator Task Force, which includes representatives from numerous agencies and professional organizations such as the Thruway Authority; New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets; New York State Department of Environmental Conservation; New York State Department of Transportation; the Apiary Industry Advisory Committee; New York Farm Bureau; and, a variety of agriculture trade organizations, environmental non-governmental organizations, and representatives of the agro-chemical industry. The purpose of the Task Force is to develop a Pollinator Protection Plan to establish a roadmap to support pollinator populations across the state.

Living Snow Fence

The Thruway Authority has continued the program of installing living snow fences along the Thruway's Right-of-Way in areas exposed to blowing snow. Snow fences play an important role in snow control measures along the Thruway by limiting snow blown from adjacent lands from reaching the highway. Living snow fences provide an excellent low maintenance barrier that also improves the aesthetics of the Right-of-Way by including the planting of shrubs and trees. In addition to the 16,500 linear feet of living snow fence already established by the Authority, an additional 27,000 linear feet were installed in 2015 along the Thruway mainline in the Syracuse and Buffalo Divisions.

Storm Recovery and Emergency Preparedness

Storm Recovery (movable dams & flood warning system)

The Canal Corporation was still recovering from damages from Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee when they were inundated with severe flooding in Herkimer, Oneida and Montgomery counties. The severe flooding spurred the advancement of mitigation measures to enable the Canals to protect their assets and warn the public more accurately about the potential risk of flooding. In order to accomplish these advancements, the Canal Corporation has been working closely with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on reimbursement funds for movable dams which will cost \$28 million and an Upstate flood warning system for \$8.5 million that is 100 percent FEMA-funded.

The structural reinforcement and other improvements at the movable dams have made significant progress and is more than 90 percent complete. The work is being done from Lock E-8 (Scotia) to Lock E-15 (Fort Plain) in Schenectady and Montgomery Counties and the expected completion is 2017. Improvements include structural and mechanical improvements enabling the removal of dam components from the Mohawk River, which had become obstructed by debris, that artificially raise peak flood levels. Additionally, procedures were developed that will be activated based on the forecast of 10-year storm or greater, and improved, more accurate modeling to 100-year flood levels.

New Advanced Flood Warning System

Governor Cuomo announced a new Upstate New York Flood Warning System in 2013. This new \$8.5 million system will substantially improve the forecasting frequency, accuracy, and modeling and mapping for any potential flooding throughout critical watershed regions in Upstate New York. This warning system will encompass three watersheds -- the Oswego River Basin, Mohawk River Basin, and Upper Hudson River Basin -- in 27 upstate counties, where flooding has long been a recurring problem. In total, more than 13,000 square miles will be covered. The New York State Canal Corporation will manage the project in coordination with its many State and Federal partners, including the New York State Thruway Authority, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, New York State Division of Homeland Security, National Weather Service, and United States Geological Survey. The system is substantially complete, with validation and optimization efforts continuing in 2016.

Winter Preparedness

The Thruway Authority, as part of its commitment to motorist safety, continued to advance winter preparedness activities. In 2015, the Authority's actions for winter preparedness included the following:

- Installed emergency closures gates at 16 on-ramps to the Niagara Thruway (I-190) in Buffalo, Kenmore and Tonawanda. The gates will help ensure motorist safety by facilitating the quick closure of the Niagara Thruway during severe winter weather events.
- Plows and other vehicles involved in winter weather response are equipped with GPS, which tracks their real time location.
- Pre-positioning of snow-removal equipment in advance of severe weather, so that it is strategically ready to respond, is being implemented more aggressively. This practice was already in place before the November 2014 storms and continues to improve through shared services coordination between state and local agencies.
- Developed response and contingency plans along its system for a range of severe weather events.
- Coordinated more closely with the Governor's Office of Emergency Management (OEM) and other state and local government partners to ensure that resources are being deployed most effectively.
- Entered into a shared services agreement with DOT to allow for the sharing of

- employees, services and resources and to work on each other's facilities and property to address an emergency situation or extreme weather conditions.
- Collaborated with state and local partners to develop contingency plans and detour routes for Western New York. These detour routes take into account the effect of the detoured traffic on state and local roadways. This may require the actual detour to begin far ahead of the impacted section of roadway, so that truck traffic can either safely continue travel or find a safe place to wait out the weather.
 - Identified truck staging areas near the Thruway exits to provide a safe location for trucks to park during storms. Staging areas need to include both parking areas where self-contained trucks can safely wait, as well as full service truck stops for day trip trucks. This effort was coordinated with State Police.

Troop T

New York State Police Troop T is the State Police unit dedicated to patrolling the Thruway system. In addition to regular enforcement activities, Troop T is an integral part of Thruway safety-related initiatives throughout the year.

- Speed Week campaigns are enforcement initiatives that focus on speeding motorists and aggressive driving. The annual *Operation Brake* community safety program, which took place during July and September, targeted speeding motorists and aggressive driving in and around construction work zones.
- Troopers monitored for distracted drivers (e.g., texting or cell phone use), impaired drivers, drivers violating the *Move Over Law* and vehicle occupants who are not properly using seat belts. Troop T also participated in several national and regional campaigns targeting speeding, aggressive driving and other violations.
- The 39th Annual *Pumpkin Patrol*, aimed at preventing Halloween pranks and protecting motorists along the Thruway, involved more than 300 volunteers from 16 local organizations from 20 counties. Troopers and volunteers, posted on highway bridges and overpasses, successfully prevented incidents of property damage or mischief.
- The Thruway Authority, in conjunction with Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) and Troop T, held its 29th Annual *Red Ribbon Campaign* to raise public awareness of its anti-DWI initiative. As part of MADD's holiday program, Thruway toll collectors distributed approximately 35,000 ribbons at key locations throughout the Thruway system. The ribbons are a symbol selected by MADD to raise public awareness about the dangers of impaired driving and visibly remind and encourage others to take the pledge to not drive while impaired.
- State Police continue to be vigilant enforcing DWI laws. Their enforcement campaigns include dedicated patrols and checkpoints, which are conducted at multiple points along the statewide Thruway system.

In 2015, Troop T welcomed new Troop Commander, the recently promoted Major Joseph W. Dodd who has served the State Police for more than 29 years.