

# Empire State Trail Section Dedicated in Schuylerville

by **Pete Bardunias**, President/CEO, the Chamber of Southern Saratoga County

Cyclists will have some great opportunities to ride alongside upstate New York waterways as the Empire State Trail continues to take shape. While the Trail meanders across many inland routes south of Albany, it essentially follows the old Erie and Champlain Canal towpaths wherever possible across the state. A new section was dedicated in Schuylerville just steps from the Schuyler Yacht Basin, the new Gateway Visitor Center (under construction) and the very spot where General Burgoyne's men lay down their arms in 1777 after the British defeat at Saratoga. "The completion of the Schuylerville section of the Empire State Trail provides an important opportunity for recreational, economic and historical development," said Tom Wood, Supervisor of the Town of Saratoga. "Local businesses will benefit and visitors will have the opportunity to learn about local history while improving their physical fitness."

Schuylerville Mayor Dan Carpenter added, "The new section of the Empire State Trail in the Village is already making a difference. The businesses are stepping up to provide amenities and information for visitors. And the village is hoping to get a grant to expand and organize the recreational opportunities between the trail and the River - a significant link in energizing the community."

Many groups got together to get the job done, including the Empire State Trail (directed by Andy Beers), the Town of Saratoga, the Village of Schuylerville, the Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce, the Chamber of Southern Saratoga County, the Schuylerville Area Chamber of Commerce, The Hudson - Hoosic Partnership, Saratoga PLAN, and more. "The section of the EST/Champlain Canalway Trail in Schuylerville is an important piece of a major interconnected trail system in Saratoga County," said Julie Stokes, emeritus board member of Saratoga PLAN. With the grant from New York State we brought together municipal, business and private partners to build this section. "The completion of this trail is the result of several people and groups all working hard together," adds Supervisor Wood. "We all share a common vision for making the Schuylerville area the best it can be."

As the Canal continues to re-shape itself for the 21st Century economy, many cyclists are trying the Canalway Challenge - an individualized contest which encourages people to try cycling, paddling, running, hiking or walking along the 524 miles of inland waterways that comprise the Canal System. "My dog and I are part of the Canalway Challenge," says Stokes. "We are over halfway to our 90 mile goal. We hope many people use this section to complete portions of this statewide challenge."

*Right above:* This photo collage from the Town of Saratoga Historian's Office describes it all - a joyous occasion along the Hudson River on June 4, 2019 as the new sections of the Empire State Trail were dedicated in Schuylerville.

*Right below:* A great shot as Town of Saratoga Supervisor Tom Wood (center, holding scissors) cuts the ribbon on the new section of the Empire State Trail. Cyclists and walkers will now have an easy trek from the Schuyler House, right through the Village to Lock C-5.

