



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR
Robert G. Ortt

Flight of Five Project Moves Forward with Second Phase

ROBERT G. ORTT August 17, 2015

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Governor Cuomo Announces Funding For Restoration of Lockport Locks

LOCKPORT - Governor Cuomo announced funding for phase II of the restoration of the historic Erie Canal locks in Lockport built in the 1840's, also known as the Flight of Five. The restoration is the centerpiece of a comprehensive economic development and downtown revitalization strategy called the Locks District Redevelopment Plan for the City of Lockport. When complete, the restoration of the Flight of Five is expected to annually draw 230,000 visitors and generate \$17 million in spending for the City. An increased CFA award of \$615,493, approved by the Western New York Regional Economic Council will allow the city to complete the restoration of lock 68 and make it fully operational.

“New York’s canal system remains a major source of economic activity in Western New York, as well as a proud part of this state’s rich history,” **Governor Cuomo** said. “Restoring these locks will continue to preserve the system’s heritage and ensure it remains a vital economic resource for Western New York for years to come.”

The five locks, numbered 67 through 71, are called the “Flight of Five” because of their stairstep design. When the canal initially opened in 1825, there were two flights of five, but one was removed when the current pair of steel locks was installed 100 years ago. Since then, the surviving flight has been used only as a spillway.

“Having supported the restoration of the Flight of Five since my time in Congress, I understand full well the significance of continued state investment in this project,” said **Lt. Governor Kathy Hochul**. “The Lockport Heritage Locks District remains the most significant historic site from the 1862-era Erie Canal that is still in operating condition. Under Governor Cuomo's leadership, millions have already been invested into the Niagara region, and these restored set of locks will continue to result in greater tourism and economic development.”

“Showcasing the canal heritage can be a massive driver for economic development and tourism for today and the generations of tomorrow,” said **Empire State Development President, CEO & Commissioner Howard Zemsky**. “I’m excited to see the expansion of economic activity resulting from the Flight of Five project.”

Lockport Locks Heritage District Corporation Chairman David R. Kinyon said “Phase II, the restoration of Lock 68, brings us one lock closer to our ultimate goal of restoring the entire Flight of Five. Once completed, the restored Erie Canal Flight of Five will join the other marvelous WNY heritage assets, such as the Darwin Martin House, Roycroft Campus, Richardson Towers, and Olde Fort Niagara, which make Western New York a tremendous destination for heritage tourists.”

The total cost of the locks restoration project (locks 67-71) is approximately \$10 million. Phase I was completed in summer 2014, for approximately \$2.6 million and completed the restoration of locks 69 and 70.

In the fourth round of the CFA, the WNY Regional Economic Development Council recommended Phase II of the Locks Restoration project as a priority project and awarded

\$700,000. An increased CFA award of \$615,493 from ESD will allow the City to complete the restoration of lock 68 and the miter gate between locks 68 and 69 to make lock 68 fully operational. Once this portion of the project is complete, three of the five historic locks that make up the Flight of Five would be restored. Increased funding will also allow for the installation of an arched bridge and completion of an interpretative gateway exhibit that will denote the importance of the Locks District and draw the attention of visitors to the Flight of Five.

State Senator Rob Ortt said, "Over the past year, the two, fully functioning Flight of Five locks have really sparked a lot of curiosity among tourists, and the additional foot traffic downtown has been really beneficial to the area. I have no doubt this additional funding to restore another lock will spark more interest and attract more tourists. Essentially, this project is restoring an important piece of our history while bringing a sense of resurgence to the city."

Assemblywoman Jane Corwin said, "The Regional Economic Development Council's investment of \$600,000 to the Flight of Five is confirmation of the significance and the importance of the locks to the City of Lockport. The resurgence of the Flight of Five will help restore much to our community, and is symbolic of the recovery that our city's economy is experiencing – including increased sales at local shops, restaurants and vineyards. Our local leaders have much to be proud of, and with the help of Governor Cuomo, this investment will be a catalyst for the future."

Mayor Anne McCaffrey said, "We are thrilled that the City of Lockport has been awarded additional funding from Empire State Development for the continued restoration of the Flight of Five historic locks. This funding will enable us to restore Lock 68 and the miter gate between locks 68 and 69. We are pleased that the Regional Economic Development Council shares our vision that the Flight of Five historic locks restoration is becoming a unique regional asset that will continue to bring more tourists to Western New York."