



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John A. DeFrancisco

Teach Your Children About the Erie Canal Through the Passport to Your National Parks Program

JOHN A. DEFRANCISCO August 17, 2009

| ISSUE: **FAMILIES**

If you're looking for a field-trip to take with your children this summer, the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor offers families a fun and affordable way to learn details of the rich history of the Erie Canal through a program called the Passport to Your National Parks.

Each year, millions of people visit hundreds of national parks in the United States, and they receive a free cancellation stamp from each park that they visit. The National Parks Service provides a free spiral-bound passport so that visitors can have a fun way to keep track of all of the national parks that they have visited.

There are so many beautiful places to visit in New York State that are a part of the National Parks system, including the 21 national parks that are a part of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor.

From Lake Champlain to the New York State Capital region, and west to Buffalo, there are many sites to see along the 524 miles of New York's man-made canal. Touring these sites is a great way to teach children about the history of the Erie Canal and how it shaped our nation.

Along the waterway, each of the 234 communities that dot the landscape of the canalway has its own story to tell. Boaters navigating the canal also can enjoy many tourist attractions. By taking time to visit each of the parks in the Erie Canal Heritage Corridor, you can provide your children a complete history of the canal.

Three of the 21 Passport sites for the National Heritage Corridor are located right here in Central New York. The Erie Canal Park and Sims Store Museum in Camillus, the Chittenango Landing Canal Boat Museum, and the Erie Canal Museum right in downtown Syracuse, are a short drive for Onondaga County residents.

Others parks in the neighboring Cayuga-Seneca region and the Mohawk and Hudson Region are a short drive or a day trip.

So whether you would like to take an afternoon field-trip and explore parks locally, or take a weekend trip to explore other parts of New York State, you will not be disappointed at the rich history and the beauty that you will find.

To learn more about the Erie Canal Passport sites visit www.eriecanalway.org.