



Thruway Fact Book

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<http://www.nysthruway.gov>
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<http://www.e-zpassny.com>

Introduction

The Thruway Authority Act of 1950 provided geographical names for each of the Thruway's sections. These include Southern Westchester, Hudson, Catskill, Mohawk, Ontario, Erie, Berkshire, New England and Niagara. Subsequent legislation named these sections for old Native American trails: the Iroquois Trail (between New York City and Buffalo), the Erie Path (between Buffalo and the Pennsylvania border), the Mohican Path (the New England Section in Bronx and Westchester Counties), the Algonquin Path (the Berkshire Section in Albany, Rensselaer and Columbia Counties) and the Tuscarora Path (the Niagara Section in Erie and Niagara Counties).

In 1964, the New York State Legislature mandated that the Thruway System be named "The Governor Thomas E. Dewey Thruway," recognizing the former Governor's vision and leadership in sponsoring the creation of the cross-state superhighway.

The Thruway has been designated a part of the national network of Blue Star Memorial Highways honoring members of the U.S. Armed Forces who served in both World Wars. It is also part of the 43,000-mile network designated by Congress in 1990 as the "Dwight D. Eisenhower System of Interstate and Defense Highways."

Thruway System

The Thruway System	
Section	Miles
THE MAINLINE (New York - Buffalo)	426 miles
ERIE SECTION (Buffalo - Pennsylvania Line)	70 miles
NIAGARA SECTION I-190 (Buffalo - Niagara Falls)	21 miles
BERKSHIRE SECTION (Selkirk - Massachusetts Line)	24 miles
NEW ENGLAND SECTION (I-95) (Bronx - Connecticut Line)	15 miles
GARDEN STATE PARKWAY CONNECTION (Spring Valley - New Jersey)	3 miles
CROSS WESTCHESTER EXPRESSWAY (I-287) (Mainline I-87 in Tarrytown - I-95 in Rye)	11 miles
INTERSTATE 84* (Pennsylvania state line at Port Jervis - Connecticut border east of Brewster)	71 miles
Total	641 miles

*Maintained by the Authority, under contract with DOT

Operating Length

Operating Length Compared With Other Expressways	
Section	Miles
New York Thruway	641 miles
Oklahoma Turnpike	606 miles
Pennsylvania Turnpike	531 miles
Ohio Turnpike	241 miles
Florida Turnpike	450 miles
Garden State Parkway (New Jersey)	173 miles
Indiana Toll Road	157 miles
New Jersey Turnpike	148 miles
Massachusetts Turnpike	138 miles
Connecticut Turnpike	129 miles

Design Criteria

- The Thruway is generally a four-lane express highway with two lanes for traffic in either direction, separated by a wide median that ranges up to 1,025 feet in width. Six lanes are available in several higher-traffic regions, as are eight lanes.
- To the right of all highway areas is a stabilized shoulder on which vehicles, including the heaviest trucks, may be parked in the case of a breakdown or other emergency.
- There are no intersections at grade, no sharp curves and no steep hills on the Thruway.
- There are acceleration and deceleration lanes, generally 1,200 feet long, at all interchanges, Travel Plazas and parking areas.
- Sight distance of at least 1,000 feet is provided to eliminate any blind spots for fast-traveling motorists.
- Signs and/or advertising devices may not be posted or maintained within 660 feet of the nearest edge of the right-of-way, except with specific permission from the Thruway Authority.

Expressway Connections

The Thruway is a key segment in the vast expressway network in the Northeast. The Thruway connects with:

- The Major Deegan Expressway at the New York City line, giving direct access south to midtown New York City.
- The [Connecticut Turnpike](http://www.ct.gov/dot/) (<http://www.ct.gov/dot/>) at the terminus of the Thruway's New England Section (I-95) in Port Chester.
- The [Massachusetts Turnpike](http://www.state.ma.us/masspike) (<http://www.state.ma.us/masspike>) at the terminus of the Thruway's Berkshire Section (I-90) in the Town of Canaan.
- Interstate 90, which heads west across the United States.
- New Jersey's Garden State Parkway at the New Jersey- New York line in Chestnut Ridge, Rockland County.

- Interstate 287, near Suffern in northern Rockland County, connecting with major highways in New Jersey.
- The Adirondack Northway, the northernmost segment of Interstate 87, which extends from Albany north to the Canadian border.
- Interstate 81, which extends from the Pennsylvania line near Binghamton north through Syracuse to the St. Lawrence River and Canada near Alexandria Bay.
- Interstate 88, near Schenectady on the Thruway, extends to Binghamton.

Construction Cost

The Thruway cost about \$1 billion to build. Costs were relatively low through upstate farmland and higher in heavily populated areas. The cost per mile from New York City to the Pennsylvania line was \$1,547,000; with the exception of the 15-mile New England Section, which cost an average of \$6,210,000 per mile; and the 21-mile Niagara Section, which cost an average of \$5,738,000 per mile.

CONSTRUCTION COST Compared With Other Expressways	
Section	Per-Mile Cost
Connecticut Turnpike	\$3,449,000
New Jersey Turnpike	\$2,200,000
Pennsylvania Turnpike (Delaware Extension)	\$1,970,000
Northern Indiana Toll Road	\$1,790,000
Garden State Parkway	\$1,720,000
Massachusetts Turnpike	\$1,600,000
Thruway, New York to Pennsylvania Line	\$1,547,000
Ohio Turnpike	\$1,352,000
Pennsylvania Turnpike (early construction)	\$736,000

Travel Plazas

The [Thruway's 27 Travel Plazas](#), many of them award-winning facilities, offer a variety of restaurants and other services designed to serve Thruway visitors for years to come.

The Travel Plazas are fun and memorable places to stop, with buildings reflecting New York State architecture such as Adirondack lodges, Shaker meeting halls and Hudson River Valley train stations. The Thruway Travel Plazas offer a wide variety of food as well as competitive fuel prices. In addition, Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) are available, as are tourist information centers and kiosks, gift shops, Wireless Fidelity (Wi-Fi), travel safety information, and up-to-date weather and traffic conditions.

All of the Travel Plazas offer family-assist restrooms, allowing people with special needs to get help from a traveling companion in total privacy. Travel Plazas are now fully accessible to travelers with special needs. Also, parents will find diaper changing areas in both men's and women's restrooms.

Travel Plazas are strategically located about every 30 to 40 miles along the Thruway. All gasoline stations at Thruway Travel Plazas have self-service islands. Upon request, people with disabilities and other travelers who so desire may receive full-service assistance at self-service pumps at self-serve prices.

For a complete listing of the Thruway's 27 Travel Plazas, please go to the following link on the Authority's website: <http://www.nysthruway.gov/travelplazas/index.html>

Tourism Information Centers

Staffed tourism information centers are located at several Travel Plazas and interchanges along the Thruway System. At these centers, Thruway travelers may obtain literature about destinations and attractions in New York State, Thruway maps and directional assistance. Some information centers operate all year; others are seasonal. All information centers at Travel Plazas operate daily from May 1 to October 31, some longer. Highway signs showing "?" and/or "Tourist Info" legends are posted along the Thruway for information centers that are open eight hours a day, seven days a week at Travel Plazas, interchanges or within one mile of a Thruway interchange.

View a list of [Travel Plaza Tourism Information Centers](http://www.nysthruway.gov/travelers/tourismctrs/index.html), please go to the following link on the Authority's website: <http://www.nysthruway.gov/travelers/tourismctrs/index.html>

Traffic Regulations and Emergency Service

- Posted speed limits are enforced by State Police Troop T, whose members patrol the Thruway exclusively.
- U-turns are prohibited, except when authorized by State Police or Thruway personnel.
- Do not park in driving lanes, on or under bridges, or in the center median.
- Do not pick up hitchhikers. Both hitchhikers and motorists picking them up are subject to arrest, as New York State law prohibits hitchhiking.
- Pedestrians, bicycles, motor scooters, ATVs, horse-drawn vehicles, snowmobiles and mopeds are all prohibited on the Thruway.
- Keep right except for passing and signal before changing lanes.
- Trucks, buses and vehicles hauling trailers are barred from the left lane on three-lane sections.
- Trucks traveling less than 40 miles per hour must use their flashing lights to warn other vehicles of their slower speed.
- New York State law requires seat belt use and that headlights be turned on when windshield wipers are used.
- Do not stop in the travel lanes with a disabled vehicle. Move well off the roadway, or to the next exit or other safe location. New York State law permits motorists to move vehicles to a safe spot following an accident or breakdown. For your own safety, stay with your vehicle until help arrives. It is illegal to walk along the Thruway.
- For the safety of all Thruway travelers, only authorized Thruway contract garages are allowed to service disabled vehicles on the Thruway. Minor repairs include tire changes, battery boosts, and supplying fuel, oil, water and/or anti-freeze. Thruway fuel stations no longer offer this roadside service.
- Authorized off-Thruway garages handle towing and major repairs that cannot be done along the Thruway. They also provide both roadside and major repairs on the Niagara, New England, I-84 and I-287 sections.

- A standard roadside service charge prevails 24 hours a day on the Thruway. Labor and materials are additional. These rates are comparable to off-Thruway rates.
- Towing charges by authorized garages for towing are based on initial hook-up and subsequent miles towed and are competitive with off-Thruway prices.

Road Condition Reports

Thruway road condition reports are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week by calling toll-free 1-800-THRUWAY (1-800-847-8929). Reports are updated as conditions change along the 641-mile superhighway.

TRANSsystem

In August 2006 the Authority launched the Transportation Regional Advisory Network System (*TRANSsystem*). This free* network of services provides motorists a combination of current and plan-ahead traveler information is delivered through a variety of mechanisms, including for the first time on the Thruway, email alerts (*TRANSalerts*). The *TRANSsystem* has been designed to provide customers with real-time traffic, weather, construction and emergency information.

Thruway patrons can sign up to receive *TRANSalerts* via e-mail or text message. The service also offers a “hold” feature which allows commuters to suspend the alerts while on vacation or allow the occasional traveler to only receive alerts when planning and/or taking a trip.

In addition, the *TRANSsystem* provides current, up-to-date traffic and traveler information including unscheduled construction and emergency information on the Authority’s homepage. The Authority continues to post emergency information on the Highway Advisory Radio (HAR), 1-800-THRUWAY and Dynamic Message Signs (DMS) along the entire system.

* While the Authority offers this service free-of-charge to subscribers, fees for text messages may apply depending on the subscriber’s text messaging provider. Customers are encouraged to contact their mobile service providers to find out how text messaging works with their personal mobile devices.

For more information about *TRANSsystem* and the 1-800-THRUWAY information line, or to sign up for the *TRANSalerts*, please visit the Authority’s website at www.nysthruway.gov/tas/.

Rest Areas/Park and Ride Lots

There are conveniently located parking areas along the Thruway System where travelers are invited to stop and rest during their trips. All of these areas have public telephones. Rest room facilities are not available at the rest areas, with the exception of the four comfort stations on I-84.

The Thruway Authority does offer several commuter Park and Ride lots across the System. Parking at these commuter lots is posted for a maximum stay of 16 hours, and are not designated for multiple day stays. There are no overnight or long-term parking facilities on the System.

For a complete listing of Park and Ride lots, [please visit the traveler’s section](http://www.nysthruway.gov/travelers/interchanges/commuter-lots.html), on the Authority’s website at the following link: <http://www.nysthruway.gov/travelers/interchanges/commuter-lots.html>

Toll Information

Tolls along the Thruway can be calculated using the [On-Line Toll and Distance Calculator](http://www.nysthruway.gov/tolls/calc/index.html). To access the Authority's On-Line Toll and Distance Calculator, please go the following link on the Authority's website: <http://www.nysthruway.gov/tolls/calc/index.html>

The controlled system is from Interchange 15 to 50 and from Interchange 55 to 61.
Outside the controlled or ticket system, fixed tolls are collected at barriers across the Thruway.

An [annual permit](#) for use on the ticketed portion of the Thruway is available through [E-ZPass](#) for a passenger car, motorcycle, or van with two axles and four tires. The permit plan is also available for vehicles displaying U.S. government license plates that meet the same vehicle classification. The permit includes the first 30 miles per trip, with the exception of a 57-cent surcharge for the Castleton-on-Hudson Bridge on the Berkshire Section. Trips taken for more than the 30-mile limit, a full-fare toll is charged beyond the first 30 miles, with a minimum per trip charge of 15 cents. [Commuter E-ZPass plans](#) are also available for those who regularly travel on the Tappan Zee Bridge or Grand Island Bridge, or through the New Rochelle, Yonkers and Harriman Toll Barriers.

For more information on signing up for E-ZPass, please go to the following link on the Authority's website: <http://www.nysthruway.gov/ezpass/index.html>

For more information on the E-ZPass Annual Permits, please go to the following link on the Authority's website: <http://www.nysthruway.gov/ezpass/discount.html#annual>

For more information on E-ZPass Commuter Plans, please go to the following link on the Authority's website: <http://www.nysthruway.gov/ezpass/discount.html#speccom>

Why Tolls?

The Thruway is strictly a user-supported System. Only those who travel the Thruway pay for it. The Thruway Authority receives no State tax dollars and is therefore dependent on toll revenues to operate, maintain and police its roads and bridges. These revenues also allow the Authority to provide a superior level of maintenance with its Snow-And-Ice Control Program.

Because tolls are a dedicated revenue source, the Authority is able to provide travelers with a safe, well-maintained and convenient transportation system with superior customer service. The Thruway is among the safest superhighways in the nation, with a fatality rate one-fifth the national average.

In 1991, an independent task force, following two years of public hearings, issued a recommendation that Thruway tolls remain. It was an issue of tolls versus taxes, with tolls perceived as being more equitable since tolls are direct user fees.

In 1989 (Chapter 634), Governor Cuomo and the State Legislature created the Thruway Authority Transition Advisory Council and charged it with the responsibility to "make recommendations concerning the future of the Thruway and the Thruway Authority after the scheduled retirement of the Authority's bondable debt in the year 1996..."

The Advisory Council concluded that tolls were the preferable choice because it was more appropriate for those who actually use the Thruway to pay for its maintenance and upkeep rather than the taxpayers of New York generally. Therefore the Advisory Council recommended to the Legislature

and the Governor, that tolls be maintained and that the Authority, with its bonding ability, be retained to meet the highway transportation needs along the Thruway corridor.

Instead of making the Thruway toll free and returning operation to DOT, in 1992, the Governor and the State Legislature enacted legislation to further expand the responsibilities of the Authority to include the operation and maintenance of the canal system and authorized additional indebtedness secured by toll revenues to assist with the financing of this new responsibility.

Unlike other highways in New York State, the Thruway Authority receives no state tax dollars. As a toll road, only the people who use the Thruway pay for it. In addition, an estimated one-third of all vehicles using the Thruway are from out-of-state.

E-ZPass

The New York State Thruway Authority pioneered the use of electronic toll collection in the Northeast when it introduced [E-ZPass](#) to travelers in 1993.

The Thruway Authority is a founding member of the 14-state, 25 agency E-ZPass Interagency Group formed in 1990 with the intention of bringing a single-tag electronic toll collection system to New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Toll authorities in many neighboring states have since joined the group.

The E-ZPass system was designed as a traffic management tool to ease congestion and make travel more convenient. While all Toll Plaza lanes are equipped to accept E-ZPass, most plazas offer non-stop “E-ZPass Only” lanes, which eliminate the need to wait in line with cash-paying customers.

With E-ZPass, tolls are either pre-paid or post-paid depending on the vehicle and account types. A tag mounted on the vehicle interacts with computers and the appropriate toll is calculated as the vehicle passes through the Toll Plaza. E-ZPass customers, passenger and commercial vehicles, receive a discount on Thruway tolls.

For more information on E-ZPass, please go to the following link on the Authority’s website:
<http://www.nysthruway.gov/ezpass/index.html>

Highway Speed E-ZPass

In January 2007, the Authority activated its first [Highway Speed E-ZPass](#) facility for commercial motorists along the Thruway at the [Spring Valley Toll Barrier](#), in Rockland County. This major milestone was a step forward in the Authority’s ongoing effort to improve customer service along the Thruway. Commercial E-ZPass customers who previously had to pull off the highway to pay their toll at Spring Valley are now able to safely bypass the Toll Plaza and electronically pay their toll while traveling at highway speed.

Additionally, in late 2007, Contract 1 work at the [Woodbury Toll Barrier](#) was completed. In April 2008, Contract 2 was awarded to Yonkers Contracting Company. Contract 2 involves most of the highway and toll booth components necessary to implement highway speed E-ZPass. The majority of the project is expected to be completed in 2009 with the remaining finish work to be completed in 2010.

For more information on Highway Speed E-ZPass, please go to the following link on the Authority's website: <http://www.nysthruway.gov/projectsandstudies/hwyspeed.html>

For more information on the Highway Speed E-ZPass at the Spring Valley Toll Barrier, please go to the following link on the Authority's website:
<http://www.nysthruway.gov/projectsandstudies/projects/springvalley/index.html>

For more information on the Woodbury Toll Barrier Highway Speed E-ZPass Project, please go to the following link on the Authority's website:
<http://www.nysthruway.gov/projectsandstudies/projects/woodbury/index.html>

E-ZPass-On-the-Go

Introduced in 2004, the [E-ZPass-On-the-Go](#) Program has made obtaining an E-ZPass more convenient for Thruway motorists. E-ZPass On-the-Go tags are available at more than 580 locations throughout the state including several gift shops located in Thruway travel plazas.

Upon purchasing an On-the-Go tag, customers will receive the full \$25 towards their E-ZPass account. E-ZPass provides a savings of 5 percent off the cash rate on all Thruway tolls for passenger vehicles. On-the-Go tags are only available for passenger vehicle use. Customers must register the On-the-Go tag within the first 48 hours of using the tag.

For more information related to E-ZPass-On-the Go Program, please go to the following link on the Authority's website: <http://www.nysthruway.gov/ezpass/passenger.html>

State Police

The members that make up [State Police Troop T](#) the New York State Thruway System exclusively. Night and day, Troop T members do emergency work at the scene of accidents, summon help for thousands of motorists with disabled vehicles and make more than 197,000 arrests each year.

The entire annual cost for Troop T's services is more than \$50 million per year and is borne by the Thruway Authority, which pays the Troopers' salaries, payroll benefits and expenses and provides them with patrol cars, uniforms and other necessary equipment.

State Police Troop T makes approximately 99,000 arrests each year on the Thruway for speeding. Radar teams, low-profile vehicles and aerial speed enforcement efforts supplement regular patrols.

A Thruway communications system provides instantaneous communication 24 hours a day among Authority Headquarters, tollbooths, and the hundreds of vehicles operated by Troopers, administrators, maintenance and emergency service crews, and toll personnel.

All communications are centralized at Authority Headquarters in Albany. The communications center is staffed by shifts around the clock with a force of civilian dispatchers, senior dispatchers and State Police technical sergeants. The Authority's Communications Supervisor oversees technical operations.

For more information on the New York State Police, please visit the Division of State Police's website: <http://www.troopers.state.ny.us/>

Safety and Service

The Thruway Authority is firmly committed to a high level of safety and service. This can only be achieved through a sound and well-maintained infrastructure of highways and bridges.

As a result of innovative and continuous safety improvements and a dedicated State Police Troop, the Thruway has continuously been recognized as one of the safest highways in the nation. The Authority is very proud of its safety record, operating one of the largest and safest superhighways in the nation.

Statistics indicate that 2008 was the third safest year in the Thruway's 53-year history. A primary measure of safety is the fatality rate, which is calculated as the number of fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles (MVM) traveled. In 2008, there were 28 fatal accidents on the Thruway resulting in 33 deaths, reflecting a fatality rate of 0.32, the third lowest rate in Thruway history.

The fatality rate along the Thruway remains significantly below the national average as calculated by the National Center for Statistics and Analysis (NCSA) of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. According to NCSA, the United States had more than 41,000 fatalities in 2007 that resulted in a fatality rate of 1.36 fatalities per 100 MVM. In New York State there were more than 1,300 fatalities in 2007 that resulted in a fatality rate of 0.97 fatalities per 100 MVM. For more information please visit: <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/>.

Maintenance

Specially trained crews maintain the Thruway throughout the year at an annual cost of more than \$148 million. More than 1,600 maintenance personnel use about 4,000 different pieces of equipment to maintain the Thruway's roadway, bridges and buildings.

Equipment used includes seven-ton trucks, pavement sweepers, mowing tractors and much more. Of some 1,400 vehicles in use, approximately 400 can be converted into snowplows in the winter.

The four Thruway divisions (Albany, Buffalo, New York and Syracuse) are divided into sections, each of which maintains an average of 28 miles of roadway. Throughout the winter months, special shifts are assigned to control snow and ice 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Some emergency repairs to the roadway and structures are done in the winter as well. During the summer months, major improvements are done on the pavement, bridges, guide railing and shoulders. Pavement-stripping, mowing, litter cleanup and patching are routinely done in better weather, but done as needed regardless of weather conditions.

Environmental Stewardship

For information about the Authority's various environmental initiatives, please visit <http://www.nysthruway.gov/environmental/index.html>.

Official Thruway Openings

Date	Terminal Points	New Mileage	Total Mileage
June 24, 1954	Lowell-Rochester	115	115
August 25, 1954	Rochester-Buffalo	63	178
September 20, 1954	Lowell-Westmoreland	5	183
October 26, 1954	Westmoreland-Newburgh	183	366
December 22, 1954	Newburgh-Harriman	15	381
May 27, 1955	Harriman-Hillburn	14	395
July 1, 1955	Hillburn-Suffern	1	396
December 15, 1955	Suffern-Yonkers	27	423
August 31, 1956	Yonkers- New York City	3	426
November 8, 1956	Grand Island (Five miles of new Thruway and the Grand Island bridges built in 1935 and acquired by the Authority in 1950)	7	433
August 21, 1957	Silver Creek-Pennsylvania Line	41	474
August 30, 1957	Garden State Parkway Connection	3	477
December 14, 1957	Silver Creek-Buffalo	29	506
October 8, 1958	Berkshire Section (Route 9 to Mass. Line)	18	524
October 18, 1958	New England Section	15	539
May 26, 1959	Berkshire Section (Route 9 to Mainline)	6	545
July 30, 1959	Niagara Section (A 6 1/2-mile portion from Buffalo 's east city line to Porter Avenue , and 1 1/2 miles from the South Grand Island Bridge to Sheridan Drive)	8	553
September 2, 1960 December 23, 1960	Niagara Section (Between Porter Avenue and Sheridan Drive in Buffalo , northbound lanes were opened September 2, and southbound lanes were opened December 23)	6	559
October 11, 1962	Second South Grand Island Bridge	---	559
December 18, 1964	Second North Grand Island Bridge	---	559
April 1, 1991	Cross Westchester Expressway (I-287) (Acquired by the Authority from New York State)	11	570
October 21, 1991	Interstate 84 (Also acquired from New York State)		

The Tappan Zee Bridge



The 3.03-mile Governor Malcolm Wilson Tappan Zee Bridge (TZB) carries the New York State Thruway's mainline across the Hudson River, connecting Westchester and Rockland Counties approximately 13 miles north of New York City. Prior to the construction of the TZB, only a ferry linked the two counties.

The first test borings for the TZB were sunk in June of 1951; construction of the Bridge began in March of 1952; and the Bridge

opened to traffic December 15, 1955. The original approaches and structure cost approximately \$80.8 million.

The New York State Legislature approved and the Governor signed an Act that officially named the structure the "Tappan Zee Bridge" February 28, 1956. The name originates from pre-colonial days, when the area was home to the Tappan Indian Tribe. "Zee" is the Dutch name for open expanse of water (sea). In 1994, the bridge was rededicated and named the "Governor Malcolm Wilson Tappan Zee Bridge," in honor of the former New York Governor.

On November 28, 2000, the New York State Thruway Authority and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority/Metro-North Railroad (MTA/MNR) announced that they would begin the Environmental Review Process. Today, the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) is the manager, with the Authority and MTA/MNR as partners. For additional information on this study, please visit <http://www.tzbsite.com/>

Tappan Zee Bridge Deck Replacement Project

In August 2006 the Authority awarded the [Tappan Zee Bridge Deck Replacement Project](#). When completed approximately 40 percent of the entire deck will have been replaced, including the west end of the bridge and the main truss. In previous years, the Authority replaced half of the center lane of the causeway and the entire east truss deck.

Physical work to the Bridge's steel and deck began in the Spring of 2007 and is scheduled to be completed in Fall 2009. The new deck, along with related repairs to the superstructure, lighting and rail, will provide more reliable service, increase safety and add convenience for motorists using this vital east-west corridor. The Authority has implemented a number of strategies to minimize the impact of this project on travelers:

- Deck replacement work will be conducted primarily during off-peak, overnight shifts, generally from 8 p.m. until 6 a.m.
- The Authority will limit the contractor's day work, permitting single lane closures only as needed.
- Deck replacement materials will be manufactured off-site, reducing noise on-site.

Today, nearly 140,000 vehicles cross the 3.03-mile TZB every day, with volumes peaking as high as 170,000 vehicles daily. When the bridge opened in 1955, it carried an average of 18,000 vehicles daily.

For additional information on the Tappan Zee Bridge Deck Replacement Project, please visit the following link on the Authority's website:

<http://www.nysthruway.gov/projectsandstudies/projects/tzbdeck/index.html>

Tappan Zee Bridge Falcon Program



In the late 1980s, the Thruway Authority added two falcon-nesting boxes to the TZB. The boxes, which are located high up on the main truss, provide falcons with commanding views of the Hudson River.

The Bridge and the falcons have a symbiotic relationship: The nesting boxes provide falcons with a high perch and the falcons keep pigeons away from the bridge. Pigeon droppings are detrimental to the paint, and consequently, the steel on the Bridge. Before the nesting boxes were added, many pigeons roosted on the TZB.

Falcon-nesting boxes have since been added to three of the Thruway Authority's other major bridges: the one-mile Castleton Bridge, which spans the Hudson River approximately 10 miles south of Albany; and the two North and two South Grand Island Bridges, which total 2.8 miles in length and span the Niagara River approximately 12 miles south of Niagara Falls.

The nesting boxes vary in size (approximately 24" x 32" x 24"), and are made of wood. A few inches of pea gravel are placed in the bottom of the box, as are drain holes. In order to enable young falcons to exercise their wings without being accidentally pushed out of the box, the boxes are either oversized, or an Astroturf covered perch is provided in front of the box.

The Peregrine Falcon is considered one of the world's fastest animals. Peregrine Falcons hunt other birds by diving after them and can exceed speeds of 200 mph while diving. Peregrines grow 15 to 20 inches in length, with females typically one-third larger than males. Females typically lay two to four eggs per year, which they incubate while the male hunts for food. The chicks hatch after about 35 days, and both parents then hunt for food for their young. Chicks leave the nest four to five weeks after hatching. Thruway maintenance work is scheduled around the Spring nesting period, in the vicinity of nesting boxes.

Tappan Zee Bridge Toll Operations

A round-trip toll on the TZB is collected from eastbound (south) traffic, while no toll is collected from westbound (north) traffic. This collection system speeds the flow of traffic and improves service to motorists. The toll for passenger cars is fixed; the toll for commercial traffic is based upon vehicle size and time of travel. There are two 35 mph E-ZPass lanes located at the Tappan Zee Bridge toll plaza.

To view the cash and E-ZPass toll schedule for the Tappan Zee Bridge, please go to the following link on the Authority's website: <http://www.nysthruway.gov/tolls/toll-files.html>.

Tappan Zee Bridge Maintenance

The New York State Thruway Authority follows a very stringent and thorough Bridge Inspection Program, as mandated by current Federal and State guidelines, and will continue to do so. Every two years, the Tappan Zee Bridge undergoes an inspection. In addition, interim inspections are conducted on the Tappan Zee Bridge to ensure that the bridge is maintained and operated safely and efficiently.

In addition to the Federal and State inspection guidelines, the Authority conducts hands-on inspections, has an 80-member crew dedicated to Tappan Zee Bridge maintenance and has installed sensors to monitor the stresses in wind bracings as related to wind speed and temperature.

The maintenance crew, headed by a professional Engineer, performs inspections and preventive maintenance of the TZB on a daily basis. The work includes painting, deck repairs, substructure concrete repairs and steel repairs. Since most of the Bridge is over water, tug boats, work boats, barges and several pieces of lift equipment facilitate inspection and maintenance operations. The Thruway Authority furnishes its own personnel and equipment to handle emergency breakdowns of vehicles crossing the Bridge. Disabled vehicles are towed to special parking areas on either side of the Bridge, where Thruway Authority truck operators work 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

New York State Canal System

At one time, more than 50,000 people depended on the Erie Canal for their livelihood. From its inception, the Erie Canal helped form a whole new culture revolving around Canal life. For many, canal boats became floating houses, traveling from town to town. The father would serve as captain, while the mother cooked for the family and crew and the children, if old enough, would serve as “hoggees” and would walk alongside the mules to lead them along at a steady pace.

For those who traveled along the Canal in packet boats or passenger vessels, the Canal was an exciting place. Gambling and entertainment were popular pastimes on the Canal and often, families would meet each year at the same locations to share stories and adventures. Today, the Canal has returned to its former glory against a backdrop of tugboats and barges, tour boats and recreational vessels, fishermen and cyclists riding the former towpaths where mules once trod. The excitement of the past is alive and well.

On November 5, 1992, legislation formed the [New York State Canal Corporation](#) and the New York State Thruway Authority took over the operation and maintenance of the 524-mile New York State Canal System. The Canal System, which was formerly operated by the New York State Department of Transportation, is comprised of the Erie, Champlain, Oswego and Cayuga-Seneca Canals. The historic waterway provides seasonal navigation between the major water bodies of New York State.

The Canal Corporation has transformed the Canal System into a world class recreationway and emerging commercial waterway, with clustered development to foster recreation, tourism and economic development, while preserving the natural and historical environment of the System and its adjacent communities.

In 1996, the Thruway Authority and Canal Corporation launched a five-year, \$20.3 million initiative to preserve and develop the Canal System for the 21st century. The Canal Revitalization Program, administered by the Canal Corporation and the Canal Recreationway Commission and based upon the 1995 Canal Recreationway Plan, presented a realistic and achievable approach to Canal System development. Major harbors have been constructed in Whitehall, Waterford, Little Falls, Oswego,

Syracuse, Seneca Falls, Rochester and the Tonawandas. Additional improvements were made in dozens of Canal communities as part of this program.

In 2000, the National Parks Service designated the 524-miles of waterway that make up the Canal System, and more than 200 surrounding Canal communities, as the “Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor.” A 27-member commission was named to oversee the corridor by pursuing the integration of Canal-related historical, cultural, recreational, scenic, economic and community development initiatives.

In 2002, Canal improvements and preservation efforts continued as part of the \$50 million Canal Revitalization Program II. A major focus of Canal Revitalization II is the investment of \$35 million to complete the Erie Canalway Trail, linking Lake Erie in Buffalo to the Hudson River in Albany. The \$50 million program is financed with \$25 million from the federal Federal Highway Administration’s Enhancement Program, which is administered by the State Department of Transportation, and \$25 million in Canal Corporation capital funds.

During 2008, the Corporation continued to implement the 2006 Erie Canal Greenway Grant Program, which was funded by \$10 million in the 2006-2007 New York State Budget. Since its inception, the Program has been providing matching grants to municipalities and not-for-profit corporations for capital projects consistent with the recommendations in the *Report on the Future of New York State Canals and the 1995 Canal Recreationway Plan*. The Corporation solicited grant applications from municipalities and non-profits for capital projects along the Canal System to preserve and rehabilitate canal infrastructure, enhance recreational opportunities for water and land-based users, and promote tourism, historic interpretation and community revitalization. The Corporation selected 57 projects for \$8.9 million in funding.

For more information on the New York State Canal Corporation, please go to the Corporation’s website: <http://www.canals.state.ny.us/>

Canal Facts

The 524-mile Canal System is made up of four Canals: the 338-mile Erie Canal, from Waterford to the Tonawandas, the 60-mile Champlain Canal, from Whitehall to Waterford, the 24-mile Oswego Canal, from Oswego to the Erie Canal at Three Rivers Junction, and the 92-mile Cayuga-Seneca Canal, which encompasses both lakes of the same names and the Canal, connecting them and passing through Seneca Falls. Connections to the Syracuse and Rochester Harbors make up an additional 10 miles of the Canal System as well.

The Canal System consists of 57 locks and 20 moveable bridges (16 on the Erie Canal, one on the Hudson River and three on the Oswego Canal). Locks and lift bridges operate daily from early May to mid November. The highest lift (40.5 feet high) on the System is at Lock 17 in Little Falls. Waterford’s “Flight of Five” is the highest flight within the shortest span in the world, lifting 169 feet in 1.5 miles.

During peak navigation season, from late May to late September, the locks and lift bridges are open from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. Hours are reduced during other periods of the navigation season. Clearances for navigating under bridges that cross the Canal System are: 20 feet for the Oswego Canal and the Erie Canal (from Waterford to Three Rivers Junction), 17 feet for the Champlain Canal, and 15.5 feet for the Cayuga-Seneca Canal and the Erie Canal (from Three Rivers Junction to Tonawanda).

The Oswego Canal and the Erie Canal (from Waterford to Three Rivers Junction) are approximately 10 feet deep. The Champlain Canal, Cayuga-Seneca Canal, and the Erie Canal (from Three Rivers Junction to Tonawanda) are approximately nine feet deep. While channel depths are subject to variation, the design depth of the Canal is 14 feet between Waterford and Oswego and 12 feet elsewhere, and efforts are underway to return the Canal to its designed depth.

It takes the average boat approximately 20 minutes to go through a lock. The lock chambers are approximately 328 feet in length, allowing boats up to 300 feet in length and 43.5 feet in width to lock through.

Canal Tolls, passes and Permits

For a complete schedule for Canal recreational and commercial passes, permits and tolls, please visit the Corporation's website at <http://www.nyscanals.gov/exvac/boating/bctolls.html>.

Commercial Shipping on the Canal

All [commercial vessels](#) navigating the Canal System must file an "Application for Canal Commercial Operator" with the New York State Thruway Authority, Department of Finance and Accounts. The annual fees for commercial operators to navigate the Canal System are: \$750 for tugs and barges, \$300 for hire boats, \$30 per passenger capacity, for tour vessels with overnight accommodations, \$10 per passenger capacity, for hourly dayliners.

For more information related to Commercial Shipping on the Canal, please visit the following link on the Corporation's website: <http://www.nyscanals.gov/corporation/commercial-shipping.html>

The Cruising Guide to the New York State Canal System

The Canal Corporation publishes, The Cruising Guide to the New York State Canal System, a comprehensive guide to boating along the Canal System. The most current version of the guide is the 3rd Edition and it includes information on the services and amenities along the Canal System, bridge clearance information, as well as tourism and Canalway Trail information. The Cruising Guide is highly recommended to those planning a trip on the Canal System and can be purchased for \$19.95, plus tax and shipping and handling. To order a copy of the guide, call 1-800-422-1825 or fill out an order form found on the Canal Corporation's website, <http://www.nyscanals.gov/exvac/cguide/index.html>.

Canalway Trail

The [Canalway Trail](#) was first envisioned as part of the 1995 Canal Recreationway Plan. The goal of this program is to establish an end-to-end multi-use trail along the NYS Canal System – more than 500 miles long – making it one of the most important long distance trails in the United States. More than 270 miles of Canalway Trail are now complete. The Canalway Trail program consists of linking the existing segments of completed trail and reconstructing the trail where needed to provide a consistent high-quality resource. Trailhead parking areas with interpretive kiosks, benches, and landscaping are also included in each project. Biker-Hiker-Boater campsites are also being installed at 30-mile increments to better facilitate long distance touring along the trail.

For more information on the Canalway Trail, please visit the following link on the Corporation's website: <http://www.nyscanals.gov/exvac/trail/touring.html>

Tugboat *Urger* Educational Program

The tugboat *Urger* is the flagship vessel in the New York State Canal Corporation's fleet. Built in 1901 in Ferrysburg, Michigan, this venerable tug is one of the oldest working vessels in the country still afloat. Originally built for use as a commercial fishing vessel, the *Urger* was originally christened the "Henry J. Dornbos," after a prominent Michigan merchant. It was described in the Detroit Free Press as the "finest fishing boat in the local fishing fleet." In the early 1920s, the tug was sold, renamed the *Urger*, and entered the New York State Canal fleet. The *Urger*, stationed in Waterford, served more than 60 years hauling machinery, dredges and scows on the Erie and Champlain Canals until it was retired from service in the 1980s. In 2001, the *Urger* was named to the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

In 1991, the *Urger*, was called back into service with a new mission, serving as the focal point of a program to educate school children and adults about the importance of New York's historic Canal System and the role that inland waterways have played historically, and continue to play, in the lives of people who live along them. In the spring and fall, the *Urger* visits communities along the Canal System and students in fourth-grade classes at local schools take field trips to the tug and participate in shore-side "hands-on" educational sessions. There they learn about the history of the Canals and the role construction of the Erie Canal played in making New York the "Empire State." The New York State Canal Corporation presents the educational program at no charge to the participating schools. During the summer months, the *Urger* travels the Canal System and participates in many canal community festival events.

For more information on the Tugboat *Urger* Educational Program, please visit the following link on the Corporation's website: <http://www.nyscanals.gov/cculture/tugboat.html>

Annual Events on the Canal

Each year, the Canal Corporation produces two event calendars: a Summer Calendar of Event and a Winter Calendar of Events. Each calendar includes a listing of the varied events that take place in the Canal communities throughout the season. Some of the System-wide, annual featured events are the Canal Clean Sweep, the Canalway Trails Celebration, the Cycle the Erie Canal Bike Tour, and the Canal Splash! For a complete listing of events, visit the New York State Canal Corporation's website at <http://www.nyscanals.gov/exvac/calendar/index.html> or call the Canal Marketing Office at (518) 436-2799 to request a free hard copy.