



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR RELEASE:
Immediately

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VILLAGE OF BROCKPORT RECEIVES PUBLIC WORKS AWARD

The New York State Conference of Mayors (NYCOM) this week recognized the Village of Brockport, Mayor Mort Wexler and the Village Board of Trustees for their "Harvester Park and Welcome Center" by designating them the winners of the 2006 NYCOM Pride in Public Works Award. The award was presented as part of NYCOM's Public Works Training School which was held in Syracuse, October 23-26. The event, attended primarily by city and village public works superintendents, municipal engineers, and department heads, is designed to bring together local officials to share ideas and hear experts in the field of public works. Approximately 130 local officials from throughout New York were in attendance.

The project was judged against entries statewide, utilizing the following four criteria: program innovation; economic benefit to the community; improvement of the quality of life; citizen participation; improved government efficiency; service improvement; and applicability to other municipalities.

In announcing the award for 2006, NYCOM Executive Director Peter A. Baynes stated, "This award demonstrates that municipalities are finding innovative ways to improve the quality of life for residents of New York State. We commend the Village of Brockport for their efforts and look forward to further stories."

The Conference of Mayors, in existence since 1910, represents more than 575 cities and villages in New York State.

EDITOR'S NOTE: See attached project description.

NYCOM
2006 Pride in Public Works Award

Village of Brockport

“Harvester Park and Welcome Center”

Harvester Park was a simple and narrow park with steep grades and a wooden stairway that had fallen into disrepair. In addition, the canal wall in the park area provided only limited boat moorings and was very deteriorated. The Village of Brockport desired to improve the park area and turn it into an asset for the community by blending modern conveniences and amenities with the natural and historic beauty of the Canal.

PROGRAM INNOVATION:

The program called for an integration of uses. The *Park and Welcome Center* needed to accommodate the village residents and businesses as well as the increased tourist trade coming by way of land and water. The Project Team also was faced with blending the historic canal heritage and features into a usable building and park setting for residents and visitors. The business community had concerns about losing their already limited parking. With a change in grade of the site, a unique design was necessary to accommodate both parking and handicap accessibility to and from both canal and street levels.

ECONOMIC BENEFIT TO THE COMMUNITY:

Economic benefits have been enhanced with the *Harvester Park and Welcome Center* by attracting people to the area and advertising community resources. The Village of Brockport has created a destination for boaters and residents, and the local merchants have benefited by the increased foot traffic generated as a result of this project. The *Harvester Park and Welcome Center* have renewed interest in the canal as a recreation resource and has enhanced public access.

APPLICABILITY TO OTHER MUNICIPALITIES:

Many other municipalities located along the Erie Canal share the same challenges and assets as the Village of Brockport. This project serves as an excellent example of a community that identified the need for creating an inviting destination for both pedestrian and boater traffic, seeking input from all stakeholders, and creating a plan for implementation of the project over a several year period. The Village of Brockport's *Harvester Park* is located along the south side of the Erie Canal, between the Main Street Bridge and Park Avenue Bridge, immediately behind the historic downtown section of Main Street.

IMPROVED GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY:

The project required an enormous amount of coordination with the Village of Brockport Village Board and DPW, various village committees, residents, property owners, business owners, the NYS Canal Corporation, and the NYS Office of Parks Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP). Construction for the overall project was completed by the Village of Brockport DPW and eight contractors and subcontractors. The village DPW completed the majority of park work and the site work for the *Welcome Center*, saving hundreds of thousands of dollars in construction costs, while maintaining the desired character of the project.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION OR PUBLIC / PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP:

The Village of Brockport met with the stakeholders several times to seek input and incorporate their needs, desires and suggestions. The village received grant money from several sources, including the NYS Canal Corporation, NYS ORPHP, New York State Assemblyman William Reilich, NYS Senator George Maziarz, and Wal-Mart Corporation. The Village of Brockport funded the remainder of the project with local funds. In addition, a landscaping donation program was established and was installed by volunteers within the community. The *Welcome Center* is staffed during the boating season with local volunteer ambassadors.

IMPROVEMENT OF THE QUALITY OF LIFE:

The *Harvester Park and Welcome Center* have become a gateway and focal point for the community. They have enhanced the downtown image by reinforcing the village's historic and agricultural character. The local businesses have benefited from increased foot traffic from visitors, local residents, and boaters. The *Harvester Park and Welcome Center* has renewed excitement for the local businesses and residents, and has created a "destination" for locals and visitors alike.