



Barges on top of barges – a fleet of canal barges planned for use on the New York State Canal System makes its way north, courtesy of a seagoing tug. The barges are especially suited for the canals, being the right size, shape and draft to maximize the amount of cargo capacity on these narrow, relatively shallow waterways that limit maneuverability. *Photo courtesy of Sea Tow.*



The tug "Margot", with pilot house lowered to clear low bridges in western NY, pushing a cargo of generators on the Erie Canal. A modern variation on "low bridge, everybody down", the "Margot's" telescoping pilot house enables it to politely duck under bridges and move its cargo to the most remote locations in New York State and beyond. *Photo courtesy of Bob Stopper, Lyons*

Bringing New York's "Marine Northway" Back Into Commercial Action

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

As New York's leading Chamber of Commerce for the marine industry and advocate for the Canal System, it makes sense that the Chamber of Southern Saratoga County should count among its members the leading tugboat transportation company serving our inland waterways. Troy-based New York State Marine Highway Transportation Company, LLC (427 River St, Troy, (518) 272-5341, www.NYSMarineHighway.com), owned by RPI graduates Rob Goldman and Tim Dufel along with Michelle Hayes, boasts a growing fleet of tugboats and barges uniquely suited to these waterways. NYS Marine Highway vessels have been moving an increasing amount of cargo on the Erie Canal and into the Great Lakes, and with the conclusion of the massive PCB dredging project on the Hudson River/Champlain Canal, the company has embarked on the largest commercial transportation project undertaken on the upper Hudson in decades, starting this past June. The cargo is crushed granite, being hauled on barges nearly the entire length of the Champlain Canal from Washington County to Troy and on to New York City for use in infrastructure construction. This efficient method of transportation reduces costs and employs local companies and residents, while having a meaningful impact on maintaining and improving downstate roads.

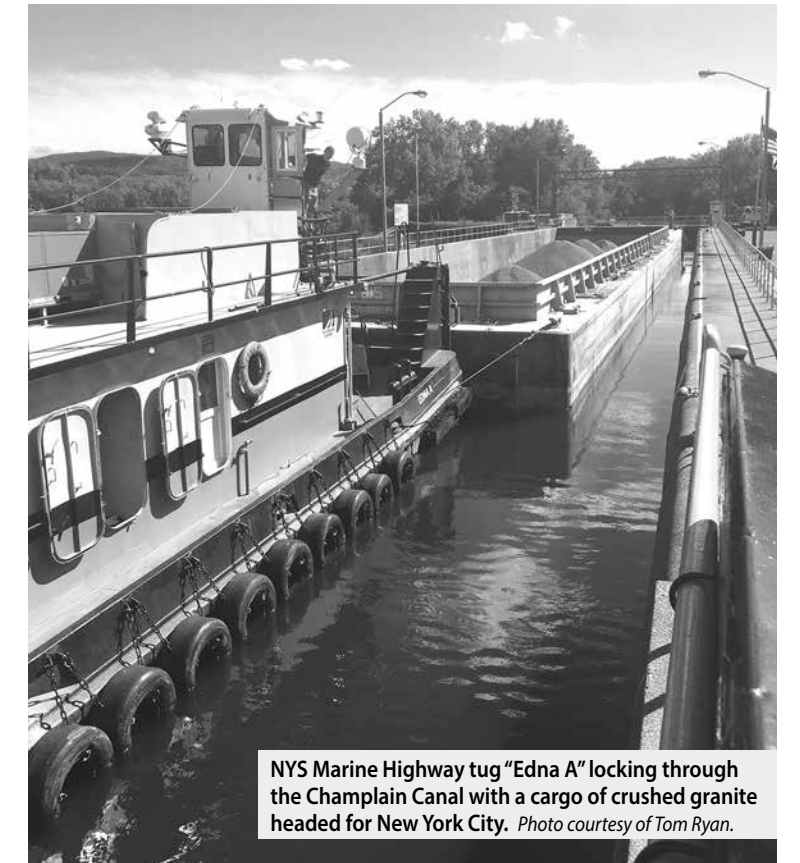
This is timely news since several other sites in Saratoga and Washington Counties have the potential to be utilized as canal terminals, including locations in Northumberland, Fort Miller and the proposed Area 3 intermodal rail/canal/manufacturing complex in Halfmoon. The Chamber of Southern Saratoga County, along with area economic development officials and a team of volunteer experts with industry experience, has made it a priority to assess the viability of these sites and seek potential developers and corporate site selectors. Obviously, this project will benefit from increased attention paid to commercial shipping opportunities on the Champlain Canal.

Goldman's tugs are very versatile, because they can do a creditable (and profitable) job even in a canal where the controlling depth has not been completely managed in decades. The Canal Corporation plans to remedy this situation, and a better maintained channel will only help the company's bottom line as well as encourage other firms to consider waterway shipments. The company boasts that it can move project cargo from the East Coast and unload at a New York State canal port with limited or non-existent infrastructure, reposition surplus marine

equipment from the Great Lakes to tidal water, provide a Ship Assist on the upper Hudson, contractor support for a drill rig rental barge or perform bulk or general towing, including logistics and necessary marine transportation equipment to do so.

The Champlain Canal is New York State's "Marine Northway" – increased use of the waterway means more efficient commerce upstate and downstate, more jobs, more economic opportunities in the manufacturing and trade sectors, and more potential expansion for waterfront commerce districts adjacent to factories, marine terminals and other operations. Kudos to Rob Goldman and the experts at New York State Marine Highway Transportation Company for leading the way and showing us a glimpse of the future of our marine superhighway!

For more information on upstate New York waterways visit www.southernSaratoga.org, stop by the Southern Saratoga Information Center at the Clifton Park Rest Area on the I-87 Northway at Exit 9, or call (518) 371-3763.



NYS Marine Highway tug "Edna A" locking through the Champlain Canal with a cargo of crushed granite headed for New York City. *Photo courtesy of Tom Ryan.*