

WESTERN NEW YORK UPDATE

NIAGARA POWER PROJECT

NEW YORK POWER AUTHORITY COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER • SPRING 2006

WNY NOTES

NYPA Observes 75th Anniversary

The Power Authority is marking its 75th anniversary during 2006 with a variety of activities designed to generate awareness among employees and the public about its history and current role in New York State's energy picture.



A week-by-week listing of key dates in Power Authority history is being posted on NYPA's web, www.nypa.gov, and at its power projects. The listings go back to NYPA's creation in 1931 and beyond, and include milestones such as completion of power projects and key legislation, as well as anecdotal developments.

During the year, a book will be produced outlining NYPA's history from its inception to the present, including major developments in recent years. They include significant investments in energy-efficiency projects and clean energy technologies, and the ongoing efforts to obtain a new license for the Niagara Power Project.

There will also be a video with historic footage of the Power Authority's development

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NIAGARA RELICENSING ADVANCES

The New York Power Authority's efforts to relicense its Niagara Power Project continue to move forward, with federal regulators now reviewing NYPA's license application and supporting documents submitted in 2005.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) has accepted the Niagara project license application along with an Applicant-Prepared Environmental Assessment, both of which NYPA filed last

The next step will be for FERC to issue a Draft Environmental Impact Statement, expected in the late spring, and then a Final Environmental Impact Statement in the fall. The Power Authority hopes to have a decision on its license application from FERC before the Niagara project's original 50-year license expires in August 2007.

If approved, the new license will provide a number of benefits to Western New York while enabling the

Power Authority to continue generating clean, low-cost hydroelectricity at its 2,400,000-kilowatt Niagara project.

Most of these benefits will not take effect until a new license is issued. However, some of the settlement agreements included up-front payments to stakeholder groups involved in the relicensing.

In late December, representatives of the Niagara Power Coalition received a total of \$8 million, reflecting the Power Authority's commitment to the host communities where its hydro project is located. The participating communities are: Niagara County, the Town of

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Flanked by Rick Chase, executive director, hydro relicensing, left, and Randy Crissman, regional manager, Western New York, right, members of the Niagara Power Coalition receive ceremonial checks signifying initial payments as part of the Niagara project relicensing.

August. The Power Authority also provided FERC with settlement agreements it has reached with a variety of stakeholders who participated in the Alternative Licensing Process, an innovative approach designed to solicit public input in the earliest stages of the relicensing effort that began in 2002.

Renovations for Community Room Will Help Power Vista to Host Events Year-Round

Originally conceived as a family-friendly introduction to the operations of a hydroelectric facility, the admission-free visitors center at NYPA's Niagara Power Project has evolved into a multifaceted community resource that regularly hosts a variety of special events for civic groups and the public at large.

This spring, work has begun to renovate the large, glass-enclosed community room where many of those functions are held. The result, expected to be evident before the end of 2006, will be a more modern, comfortable facility that is better able to handle school and community groups throughout the year.

"The Power Vista is a major attraction for local residents and out-of-town tourists looking for a fun and interesting way to learn about hydropower and electricity production on the Niagara Frontier," explained Randy Crissman, NYPA's regional manager for Western New York. "We also make our visitors center facilities available to area school, civic and busi-

ness groups for field trips, meetings and social gatherings. The renovations we are making this year will enhance the Power Authority's efforts to be a good neighbor in this part of the state."

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The Power Vista's Community Room hosts a variety of special events throughout the year, including NYPA's popular Wildlife Festival each fall.

www.nypa.gov

5777 Lewiston Road
Lewiston, NY 14092



Relicensing

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Lewiston, the City of Niagara Falls, the Town of Niagara, the Lewiston-Porter Central School District, the Niagara Falls City School District and the Niagara Wheatfield Central School District.

Also in December, NYPA made an initial settlement agreement payment of \$5 million to the Tuscarora Nation, and agreed to provide an advance payment of \$400,000 to the state Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation for development of the Niagara River Greenway Plan.

Among the benefits included in the Niagara license application and associated settlement agreements are: a \$12 million fund to build Habitat Improvement Projects to help protect fish and wildlife along the Niagara River corridor; \$9 million a year for the Niagara River Greenway; a \$19 million fund to address the Niagara project's impact on groundwater flow; a \$9 million fund to improve state recreational facilities; \$1 million annually for the Tuscarora Nation; and \$5 million in annual contributions to a Host Community Fund for capital projects, economic development, and public health and safety projects within the local municipalities. ❖

Community Room

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Tonawanda-based D.V. Brown & Associates was awarded a contract late last year to make the Power Vista's community room fully climate-controlled. The work will include installation of new heating, ventilation and air-conditioning systems, plus replacement of the room's floor-to-ceiling sliding glass win-



NYPA's Joanne Willmott, left, and Cathy Blood review plans for Community Room improvements.

dows and doors, which open onto an outdoor patio that overlooks the Niagara River Gorge.

In recent years, the Power Authority has made its community room available without charge to an average of 30 groups a year, mostly non-profits. Special events connected with the visitors center, including NYPA's popular Wildlife Festival held each fall, also utilize the community room.

Opened in 1963, the Power Vista has played host to more than 6 million visitors from around the world. An extensive upgrade of many of its interactive displays and exhibits was completed in 2001. The visitors center's exhibit area will remain open to the public during the community room renovations. ❖

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

At the Power Vista:

April 8 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Easter "Eggs"travaganza

May 6 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Every Day is Earth Day

Mark Your Calendars:

August 25-27
Historic Lewiston Jazz Festival

LEARNING TO CONSERVE



A free NYPA-sponsored Energy Expo attracted more than 250 Western New Yorkers to the Drew Magnet School in Buffalo last November. The Power Authority and other state agencies organized the event to showcase energy-efficient products and services intended to minimize soaring energy costs for local residents and businesses.

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over the years. On April 28, one day after the official anniversary, several observances keyed to employees will be held at NYPA power projects and facilities around the state. Gov. Franklin D. Roosevelt signed legislation creating the Power Authority on April 27, 1931.

The Niagara Power Project produced its first commercial power in 1961. It was the largest hydropower facility in the Western world at the time. Today, the Niagara project remains the biggest electricity producer in New York State, generating 2.4 million kilowatts of low-cost power.

In 1991, the Power Authority began a \$300-million upgrade and modernization at the Niagara project to extend the lifespan and improve the efficiency of the generating units. The work is scheduled for completion this year. ❖

ABOUT WNY UPDATE

This newsletter reports on Power Authority activities in Western New York, particularly those associated with NYPA's Niagara Power Project.

We welcome your comments. To contact us, call Joanne Willmott, community relations manager, 716-286-6651.