



Hudson River SkyWalk by the NYS Bridge Authority project reaches milestones

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Hudson, NY Governor Andrew Cuomo discussed major milestones in the Hudson River SkyWalk project, a scenic pedestrian trail linking two historical sites across the Hudson recently. The roughly one-mile long sidewalk of the Rip Van Winkle Bridge has been completely rebuilt by the New York State Bridge Authority with the addition of three scenic viewpoints, each 50 ft. long by 10 ft. wide. These scenic viewpoints will provide the public with unparalleled views of the Hudson River and Catskill Mountains.

The governor also launched Phase 3 of the \$14.6 million project, which is part of his tourism initiative in this year's State of the State. Phase 3 will utilize \$8 million for the NYS Department of Transportation to convert the intersection of Rte. 9G and Rte. 23 in Greenport, Columbia County, into a pedestrian-friendly roundabout that will provide tourists a direct connection from the east end of the Rip Van Winkle Bridge to the Olana State Historic Site. Phase 3 is scheduled for substantial completion in fall 2018.

As part of the \$6.275 million cost for Phase 2, the Capital Region Regional Economic Development Council initiative awarded Greene County \$875,000 in the 2016 Consolidated Funding Application awards through the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program. The award was given to help build the three scenic viewpoints and design and construct a sidewalk from the Thomas Cole National Historic Site to the Rip Van Winkle Bridge that will be completed in fall 2018. The New York State Bridge Authority provided \$5.4 million in capital funds toward Phase 2 to rehabilitate and rebuild the entire sidewalk and the railing along the Rip Van Winkle Bridge, while adding the three new scenic viewpoints.

To help market this regional tourist attraction, governor Cuomo created the Hudson River Skywalk Region with \$225,000 in Market NY funds awarded to Thomas Cole National Historic Site in the 2017 Consolidated Funding Application awards through the Capital District Regional Economic Development Council. The Market NY funding award will help bring attention to this internationally significant destination through a coordinated advertising campaign, special exhibitions, coordinated visitor research and special events, including the Skywalk Arts Festival.

To enhance the Hudson River Skywalk Region, both historic sites have coordinated their schedules so that their historic homes and studios will be open on Saturdays and Sundays in March, and Fridays through Sundays starting March 30 (except on Easter Sunday, April 1). The grounds at both sites are open throughout the year.

Starting May 1, the Thomas Cole Site will be open for the season from Tuesday through Sunday. Starting June 19, Olana will be open for the season from Tuesday through Sunday. Additional visitors' information is available at www.olana.org and www.thomascole.org.

NYSDOT hosted an open house presenting the preliminary concept for the roundabout on Thursday, March 22 at Columbia-Greene Community College's Professional Academics Center at 4400 Rte. 23.

"The Hudson River Skywalk proudly puts on display the majesty of the Hudson River and the Catskill Mountains," governor Cuomo said. "This project is a perfect example of a successful public-private partnership between state and local partners promoting a unique part of New York State history and creating a timeless experience for generations to come."

Bridge Authority executive director Joseph Ruggiero said, "Governor Cuomo's support has helped this project reach a critical milestone and allowed it to progress to the next phase, which will benefit the public and the entire Catskill-Hudson Valley region. The Bridge Authority looks forward to continue working hand in hand with all of the community partners to make sure this project is a success."

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