



Governor Cuomo celebrates Capital Region Welcome Center: New 11,000 s/f facility to promote tourism, industry

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New Baltimore, NY Governor Andrew Cuomo celebrated the grand opening of the Capital Region Welcome Center. The Welcome Center, with a historic Dutch-style building façade, represents the gateway into the Capital Region for northbound travelers and promotes the region's local tourism industry, history, food and beverages.

"Tourism is a pillar of economic development for New York, and through strategic investments in the industry, we are strengthening our commitment to growing regional economies and promoting local attractions across the Empire State," governor Cuomo said. "The Capital Region Welcome Center embodies the rich history and world-class destinations this region has to offer and will bolster the regional economy for decades to come."

Approximately 15 miles south of Albany, the Capital Region Welcome Center is located across from the New York State Thruway Authority's New Baltimore Service Area on the Thruway (I-87) between exit 21B (Coxsackie - Route 9W) and exit 21A (Berkshire Section/to Mass Pike).

The new Capital Region Welcome Center is one of 11 welcome centers strategically located across New York State. The Capital Region Welcome Center becomes the third welcome center built along or near the New York State Thruway in addition to the Western New York and Mohawk Valley Welcome Centers. Other welcome center sites include New York City, Long Island, the Southern Tier, Central NY, the Finger Lakes, the Adirondacks, Hudson Valley/Catskills and the North Country. Funding for regional welcome centers was included in the FY 2018 State Budget.

The 11,000 s/f Capital Region Welcome Center exterior is designed after architecture rooted in the historical Dutch traditions of the area. It includes an artifact wall featuring regionally-specific items that showcase the history and heritage of the region. The welcome center features I LOVE NY interactive kiosks to showcase local attractions and tourism destinations in the region, a video wall, and a Taste NY Market offering an array of New York grown products.

The Taste NY Market will showcase a broad selection of fresh made breakfast and lunch items, including soups, salads, sandwiches and desserts using ingredients sourced from Capital Region growers and producers. It will also offer grab-and-go snacks, and specialty local gift items for sale, providing an opportunity for local producers to market their products and to connect New York's residents and visitors to the state's food and beverage producers. The current menu and list of products available can be found [here](#). The Taste NY Market will be open 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. seven

days a week.

The grounds of the new Welcome Center feature an outdoor, park-like environment, which will include an area for farmers' markets featuring local products and a music-themed children's playground, a nod at the region's multitude of theatres and performing arts centers.

The Welcome Center is accessible to Thruway traffic traveling northbound on I-87 taking the New Baltimore Service Area exit ramp. Northbound traffic will continue to have access to fuel and amenities provided by the existing New Baltimore Service Area on the other side of the highway.

Empire State Development president, CEO and commissioner Howard Zemsky said, "The Capital Region Welcome Center highlights the rich history and heritage of the region, while encouraging visitors to experience local attractions and support Taste NY businesses."

The Capital Region Welcome Center features regionally-specific elements linked to the history and natural beauty of the Hudson River Valley, which includes such attractions as the New York State Capitol, the historic Saratoga Race Course, and the Lake George region. The Welcome Center includes a Taste NY Market showcasing locally grown and sourced products from across the Capital Region and the state.

The new Welcome Center was constructed consistent with Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) design standards and features solar panels, high-speed Electric Vehicle charging stations, rainwater management, enhanced use of natural lighting, and energy efficient building materials.

Since taking office in 2011, governor Cuomo has made unprecedented investments in the tourism industry throughout New York State, resulting in historic levels of visitors and direct spending. Last year, New York welcomed a record 243.8 million visitors who spent \$67.6 billion, generating a total economic impact of more than \$100 billion for the fourth straight year. Tourism is now the state's third largest employer, supporting 938,800 jobs annually.

The Capital Region welcomed nearly 19 million visitors in 2017, up 15% since 2011. Direct visitor spending in the region topped \$2.8 billion in 2017, an increase of 22% since 2011, and the industry supported 51,775 jobs.

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