



STATE OF NEW YORK | EXECUTIVE CHAMBER

ANDREW M. CUOMO | GOVERNOR

**For Immediate Release:** March 8, 2012

**GOVERNOR LAUNCHES "PATH THROUGH HISTORY" INITIATIVE TO SUPPORT TOURISM,  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND HIGHLIGHT STATE'S HISTORIC PAST**

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today launched the "Path Through History" initiative to highlight the state's rich history while bolstering tourism and economic development. This initiative is designed to raise the profile of New York State's unparalleled network of museums, historic sites, and other cultural institutions.

The first step in the initiative will be to establish uniform road signs in different locations across the state that promote local historic sites from New York's history.

In addition to the new sign system on the Thruway, the initiative includes:

- Installation of new "Path to History" information kiosks at Thruway rest stops
- Customized "Path to History" tours on such topics including Industry and Technology; Women's Rights and Civil Rights, New York and Independence; Civil War, and Scenic Wonders.
- Improved signs on local roads to encourage visitors to visit local historic and tourism sites
- A web-based interface that allows Thruway travelers to learn more about key historic sites in the Thruway corridor and to follow "Path to History" routes

"This initiative will use New York's rich history to encourage tourism, local economic development and serve as an educational tool for all New Yorkers," Governor Cuomo said. "The exhibits that we have set up in the Capitol have turned the building into a tribute to New York and now it is time to expand that to include the wealth of history that our state has to offer."

This Governor's Initiative will highlight a dozen major topics in which the places and citizens of the Empire State have played the dominant role in shaping American history. The initiative will foster cooperation and coordination among institutions and regions and focus on the entire state, highlighting that critical events, historic buildings, and important movements have added significance when they are interpreted within the entire state and nation's history as a whole. The initiative is designed to drive "heritage tourism" in New York, boosting local economies across the state, and supporting the state's many communities with historic sites and cultural exhibits.

The Governor also announced the creation of a Historic Corridor Task Force composed of leading historians to advise the Thruway and the state on the creation of the initiative. The Task force will be co-chaired by Mark Schaming, Director of the State Museum, and award-winning historian and Senior Vice President of the Metropolitan Museum of Art Harold Holzer. Additional members of the Task Force include Dr. Robert Harris of Cornell University, Kenneth T. Jackson, Professor in History and the Social Sciences at Columbia University, and Dr. Lisa Keller, Professor of History, Urban and Women Studies at SUNY Purchase.

Thruway Chairman Howard P. Milstein said "Governor Cuomo's historic sign initiative will greatly assist in fostering increased economic development and tourism in the Thruway and Canal Corridor. I've instructed our staff to consider several additional specific ways to be innovative and energetic in making all we can of opportunities to enrich our customer's experience, and increase traveler's awareness of New York's many historical and recreational assets."

Harold Holzer, Senior Vice President of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, said, "It was not, after all, an accident that New York became, as George Washington had predicted, the 'Empire State,' or that the tiny settlement in lower Manhattan became the 'Empire City' and the capital of the world. No other place - not Massachusetts, not Virginia, and not Pennsylvania - even comes close to the Empire State when all things are considered. New York State was the leading contributor of men, manpower, and funds to save the Union and end slavery during the Civil War. With the Governor's leadership, sustained effort, determination, and hard facts, we can convince our fellow citizens that today's America took shape in yesterday's New York."

Mark Schaming, Director of the State Museum, said, "When Americans think of history they do not think of New York. And when they think of New York they do not think of history. New York is known to most Americans as a destination not to study the past but to experience the present, whether the bright lights of Broadway, the racetrack at Saratoga, or a river cruise up the Hudson. The Governor's Historic Tourism Initiative is designed to change this perception of New York among both residents and visitors to show that events in New York have dominated and defined the larger American experience."

The Historic New York Initiative follows the recent renovation of the New York State Capitol, which includes hundreds of newly installed displays relating to New York State's social, technological, and political history. The Hall of Governors now includes identifications of each past Chief Executive, together with the dates of their service. A timeline of state history has been etched on the walls of the Second Floor, where the Governor's office is located.

###