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**The Heartland Passage Tour brings songs, stories and film
to commemorate the Erie Canal Bicentennial**

Party Like it's 1817

NEW YORK, NY (JULY 5, 2017) - A bicentennial party is floating its way to ports of call along the Erie Canal from the Brooklyn Waterfront to the Buffalo Waterfront on Lake Erie.

From September 2 through September 23, the *Heartland Passage Tour* will bring troubadours, tugboat crew members and other storytellers - plus award-winning musicians and an Academy Award winning filmmaker - to ten cities and towns connected to the Erie Canal. The *Tour* will mark the start of the Canal in 1817 - which made New York America's global city and helped create the cities of Syracuse, Buffalo, Rochester and Utica. The *Tour* celebrates and helps preserve the culture and way of life the Canal engendered - and that has become endangered and revived - as it continues to shape the lives of New Yorkers.

At each stop (schedule attached), singers and storytellers will perform, either at dockside or in selected historic venues including a canal cruiseboat and the Barge Museum in Brooklyn. Performers include **Jay Ungar & Molly Mason**, famous for "Ashokan Farewell," the theme song for Ken Burns' *Civil War* series; **Kimball, Canning, Bolt and McClure** performing the music of traveling troupes along the Canal in its heyday; Erie Canal songsters **George Ward**, The **Dady Brothers & Kit Fallon**, and **Dave Ruch**; and tugboat captain **Steve Wunder**. Each event will include a screening of ***Boom and Bust: America's Journey on the Erie Canal***, a short documentary by Academy Award winning independent filmmaker **Paul Wagner**, a meditation on the economic cycles along the canal that speak to the fate of the American dream. As historian Wendy Wall sums it up, "The story of the Erie Canal really reflects the story of the nation. If you think about the early 19th century, the story of the Erie Canal is one of nation building, the industrialization of America and the opening of the west. If you look at the 20th century, the story of the Erie Canal becomes one of de-industrialization. Yet it's still a

hopeful story - because if you look at what's happening to the canal, in cities and towns all along its route it's now an engine for tourism and economic development. So it's really a story of America re-inventing itself."

"Although it was called "Clinton's Folly," the Erie Canal was an engineering miracle," said folklorist and Project Codirector Karen Canning. "By linking the port of New York to the Great Lakes and the Midwest, it made fortunes in its wake. *The Heartland Passage Tour* celebrates the Canal and the folklore it spawned in song and story."

"The cultural impact of the Canal was huge," said Steve Zeitlin, director of City Lore. "Low Bridge, Everybody Down! (the Erie Canal Song)", most recently performed by Bruce Springsteen, was one of dozens of songs inspired by the Canal. The songs of Stephen Foster are part of the Canal's history. Even George M. Cohan wrote a song about the Canal.

About The Heartland Passage Tour: The Heartland Passage tour is a unique new performance event that will travel on the Erie Canal September 2 - 23 to celebrate its bicentennial and demonstrate its cultural and historic impact through songs, stories and the documentary film *Boom and Bust*. The tour is funded by the National Endowment for the Arts and a Regional Economic Development Grant through the New York State Council on the Arts. The Tour is sponsored by City Lore (www.citylore.org), the Erie Canal Museum (www.eriecanalmuseum.org) and Livingston Arts (www.livingstonarts.org). For more information and tickets see www.citylore.org/heartland-passage-tour.

About the Sponsors: Founded in 1986, **City Lore's** mission is to foster New York City - and America's - living cultural heritage through education and public programs. **The Erie Canal Museum** in Syracuse provides engaging educational experiences that champion an appreciation and understanding of the Erie Canal. The mission of **Livingston Arts** is to enrich the quality of life in Livingston County and Western New York by encouraging and promoting the arts and cultural activities.

See Full Schedule at:
www.citylore.org/heartland-passage-tour