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Fairport Continues to Use Erie Canal for Development

By: Sheba Clarke

The World Canals Conference is giving towns across the region a chance to showcase their sections of the Erie Canal.

The village of Fairport is one of them. The historic Erie Canal has been key in developing the village into what it is today. The canal path that runs through is what created this community.



"We've been boating on the canal for almost 25 years," said Eric Patchke, who stopped in Fairport to participate in the conference flotilla.

Eric and Cindy Patchke are from Ogden. A lot has changed since they first started traveling the canal, on-board their 60-year-old boat "Sea Pup."

"There weren't a lot of things for pleasure boaters. Now that's changed a tremendous amount," said Eric.

"It was pretty rough when we first started. It was miles before places to tie up," said Cindy.

According to the Fairport Village Partnership, more than 3,000 boat nights are spent there a year. Fairport has become a destination.

"For decades Fairport has invested in its waterfront and those investments pay off," said Scott Winner, Fairport Village Partnership director.

To visitors like Hendrik and Jennifer Vanedig the canal is one of their favorite places, but they said it still hasn't been maximized to its full potential.

"It should be more of a magnet actually. I grew up in Germany and we learned in school the historic importance of the canal," said Hendrik of East Rochester. "When I came here 10 years ago I was a little surprised to see how much little attention by the local residents as well."

Residents have their own ideas of what they would like to see in the canal's future.

"Smoother bike paths things like that, more rest stops also for kayaking or bicycling," said Jennifer of East Rochester.

Development has brought it to where it is today, but leaders say the future is headed in the right direction.

"Our goal in Fairport at this stage is to do every thing we can to be mentioned in the same breath as Skaneateles and Saratoga and Niagara on the Lake," said Winner.

Village of Fairport

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