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WORLD CANALS CONFERENCE 2025 TAPS LOCAL LEADERS TO SERVE AS CO-CHAIRS AND EMCEE

Buffalo, New York, USA (January 22, 2025) — The highly anticipated [World Canals Conference 2025](#) (WCC2025), set to take place in Western New York on September 21-25, 2025, is proud to announce its honorary co-chairs and emcee. Selected because of their knowledge and enthusiasm, these individuals infuse the event with genuine Buffalo spirit, making it a true celebration of the Erie Canal's bicentennial.

Champions of the Canal's Legacy

[Anne McCaffrey](#), President and CEO at People Inc., and [Keith Belanger](#), Senior Executive Vice President at M&T Bank, will serve as co-chairs. They will serve as key promoters and ambassadors, working to identify and secure conference sponsors while creating strategic partnerships to enhance the event's impact on the region.

"No public infrastructure in New York has played a bigger role in the history of our state than the Erie Canal," said Bellanger. "For decades, it was the principal means of interstate commerce and migration in the Northeast and Midwest, helping make our country great. I look forward to being a part of celebrating the canal's bicentennial in Buffalo."

"I'm thrilled to shine the spotlight on the Erie Canal, Buffalo, and Western New York for the World Canals Conference," said McCaffrey. "This is a tremendous opportunity to showcase the role of canals and inland waterways in our past, present, and future."

Master of Ceremonies

[John Kucko](#), photographer, and former TV sports anchor, will serve as emcee for the WCC2025. Known for his engaging presence and deep appreciation for the Erie Canal, John will guide attendees through the event with energy and charisma. In addition to introducing speakers and keeping the agenda running smoothly, John will share his stunning photography and recount his experiences along the Erie Canal, offering attendees a unique perspective.

"It is a tremendous honor to serve as emcee for such a global event, especially in the bicentennial year of our beloved Erie Canal," said Kucko. "This historic waterway was integral in the growth of so many hamlets, towns, villages and cities between Albany and Buffalo and beyond. The canal represents Americana at its very best and I cannot wait for the WCC2025."

To get involved with WCC2025, [register](#), attend as an exhibitor or explore sponsorship opportunities, visit <https://wcc2025buffalo.com>. **Stay updated by subscribing to the WCC2025 newsletter [HERE](#).**

The 2025 World Canals Conference is hosted by the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor and the New York State Canal Corporation, in partnership with Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation and Visit Buffalo Niagara.

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