

For Immediate Release
Monday, Dec. 19, 2011

Contact: Sandi Mulconry
Group M Communications
315-685-9363
sandi@groupmcom.com

Mid-Lakes Navigation Will Exhibit at New York Boat Show

For the first time in a decade, Skaneateles-based Mid-Lakes Navigation Co. will have a presence at the New York Boat Show, taking place Jan. 4-8 at the Javits Center in Manhattan.

Mid-Lakes Navigation will join the New York State Canal Corporation in its efforts to promote the New York State Canal System—comprising the Erie, Cayuga-Seneca, Oswego and Champlain canals—as a vacation and travel destination for both boaters and land-side visitors alike.

On display as part of the Canal Corporation’s exhibit will be the *Canadice*, a 33-foot-long Lockmaster canalboat from the Mid-Lakes fleet.

According to Sarah Wiles, co-owner and director of marketing for Mid-Lakes Navigation, the decision to attend was not taken lightly. “It’s an expensive and time-consuming proposition, but once we decided to go, things started moving rapidly,” she says. “Nearly the entire year-round staff, including the family members and office staff, have put on their work clothes and picked up sanders, grinders and brushes to get the *Canadice* ready for the show.

“Each Lockmaster in our fleet comes home to our boat barn near Skaneateles every five years for a major overhaul, in addition to receiving regular maintenance each spring,” she says. “This year, the *Canadice* will get just a little extra care!”

The boat, which weighs 10 tons, will be transported to New York by Lockview Marina & Transport, of Cayuga.

The *Canadice* and Mid-Lakes' nine other traditionally styled Lockmaster canalboats were designed and built at the Borodino Boatworks between 1986 and 2001 specifically for self-skippered charter on New York's canals. They are rented by families, couples and friends, who cruise at their own pace for a week or partial week after receiving a comprehensive driving lesson and tips on where to go.

"The Canal Corporation could not be more pleased or proud to be joined by Mid-Lakes Navigation for the world's greatest annual boating event," says Brian U. Stratton, director of the New York State Canal Corporation. "Their participation, and the presence of the *Canadice* on the convention center floor, will have a major impact on the success of our exhibit and generating traffic for the New York State Canal System in the 2012 navigation season.

"It's because of innovative, hard-working companies like Mid-Lakes Navigation and others that New York state's 524-mile canal system generates an estimated \$380 million each year in direct tourism-related revenue across the upstate region," he adds. "Today the Erie Canal continues to be a major attraction, not only for recreational boaters and commercial navigation but also for cyclists, pedestrians and outdoor enthusiasts who enjoy the Erie Canalway Trail."

Mid-Lakes first took a Lockmaster to the New York Boat Show in 1995. "It was quite daunting logistically, and we didn't know what to expect," says Peter Wiles Jr., co-owner and president of Mid-Lakes. "We were bowled over by the excitement and enthusiasm of the visitors. We had the boat all set up for cruising, and people would come aboard, look around, ask some questions and then just sit on a berth and relax. You could see them planning their canal vacations in their head and thinking, 'We could really do this!'"

A lot of them did. That year, about 20 percent of the season's bookings came from people who had visited the boat at the show.

After that, Mid-Lakes exhibited with the Canal Corporation almost every year until 2002, when the Canal Corporation scaled back its space at the show.

“We are so excited that the Canal Corporation decided to go with a big exhibit again,” says Sarah Wiles. “There's only one Erie Canal, and we New Yorkers have it. Mid-Lakes Navigation is really proud to help show it off.”

The Progressive New York Boat Show is presented by the National Marine Manufacturers Association. Tickets are \$14; children are admitted free when accompanied by an adult. The Canal Corporation exhibit will be in space D69.

For more information on the show, go to <http://www.nyboatshow.com>. For more information on Mid-Lakes Navigation, go to <http://www.midlakesnav.com>. For more information on the New York State Canal Corporation, go to <http://www.canals.ny.gov>.

-#-