



**Bridge
Authority**

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BRIDGE AUTHORITY ANNOUNCES INSTALLATION OF SIX INTERPRETIVE SIGNS ALONG HUDSON RIVER SKYWALK

Highland, NY – The New York State Bridge Authority today announced another milestone was reached on the Hudson River Skywalk project with the installation of six interpretive signs along the newly rehabilitated sidewalk of the Rip Van Winkle Bridge. These signs were created in partnership with Columbia Memorial Health who contributed towards their design and production. These signs are placed along the three scenic viewpoints of the Hudson River Skywalk that were recently unveiled by Governor Andrew Cuomo that provide visitors unparalleled views of the Catskill Mountains and the Hudson River.

Historical information contained on the signs include topics ranging from historical art figures Thomas Cole and Frederic Church and the founding of the Hudson River School of Art, to the history of the Rip Van Winkle Bridge and the New York State Bridge Authority. Other topics include the Thomas Cole House National Historic Site and Olana State Historic Site, which will be connected by a pedestrian trail as part of the Hudson River Skywalk project, and other interesting tourist sites in Columbia and Greene Counties.

“These signs help convey the significant impact this region has played in shaping our nation’s history to visitors and tourists,” **Bridge Authority Executive Director Joseph Ruggiero** said. “It is important to showcase the natural beauty of the region as well as highlighting the historical moments that make this area of the state so special.”

Columbia Memorial Health spokesman William Van Slyke said, “Columbia Memorial Health is a proud partner of the Skywalk project. Its path across the Rip Van Winkle bridge is an incredibly vital connection point; a place where commerce and culture are exchanged, and where all of us can connect with the natural beauty and rich history of the Hudson river valley. We encourage everyone in our community to be more active as a way to stay healthy, and there are very few places where one can get a little exercise that are more beautiful than the Skywalk.”

Photos of the interpretive signs can be seen [here](#).

Bridge Authority Chairman Richard A. Gerentine said, “Governor Cuomo’s and Columbia Memorial Health’s support has helped this project reach another critical milestone that will be enjoyed by the public and the entire Catskill-Hudson Valley Region. These signs help underscore the importance this community has played in American history. The Bridge Authority looks forward to continue working hand in hand with all of the community partners to make sure this project is a success.”

The Governor recently launched Phase 3 of the \$14.6 million project, which he announced as part of his tourism initiative in this year’s State of the State. Phase 3 will utilize \$8 million for the NYS Department of Transportation to convert the intersection of Route 9G and Route 23 in the town of Greenport, Columbia County, into a pedestrian-friendly roundabout that will provide tourists a direct connection from the east end of the Rip Van Winkle Bridge to the Olana State Historic Site. Phase 3 is scheduled for substantial completion in fall 2018.

To help market this regional tourist attraction, Governor Cuomo recently announced the creation of the Hudson River Skywalk Region with \$225,000 in Market NY funds awarded to Thomas Cole National Historic Site in the 2017 Consolidated Funding Application awards through the Capital District Regional Economic Development Council. The Market NY funding award will help bring attention to this internationally significant destination through a coordinated advertising campaign, special exhibitions, coordinated visitor research and special events, including the upcoming Skywalk Arts Festival.

To enhance the Hudson River Skywalk Region, both historic sites have coordinated their schedules so that their historic homes and studios will be open on Fridays through Sundays. The grounds at both sites are open throughout the year. The Thomas Cole House National Historic Site is open from Tuesday through Sunday and beginning June 19, Olana State Historic Site will be open for the season from Tuesday through Sunday. Additional visitors' information is available at www.olana.org and www.thomascole.org.

The Hudson River Skywalk project is supported by a broad range of local organizations including Columbia Memorial Health; Historic Bridges of the Hudson Valley; Columbia County Economic Development Corporation; Scenic Hudson; Olana State Historic Site; The Olana Partnership; Thomas Cole House National Historic Site; Greene County Economic Development, Tourism and Planning; and the New York State Bridge Authority.

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