

RESTORED LANSING MANOR: A JOURNEY BACK IN TIME

Hosting more than 40,000 visitors a year, the Blenheim-Gilboa visitors center is one of the Schoharie Valley's top tourist destinations.

It's packed with high-tech interactive exhibits and videos that demonstrate operations of the New York Power Authority's Blenheim-Gilboa Pumped Storage Power Project and give details about area wildlife and geographical features.

But a short walk away, visitors are whisked on a journey back in time when they enter the crown jewel of the visitors center complex—historic Lansing Manor, a living monument to 19th-century country life.

Built in 1819 by John Lansing, who represented New York as a delegate to the Constitutional Convention in 1787, the manor was a gift to Lansing's daughter, Frances, and her husband, Jacob Sutherland. It was privately owned until the Power Authority acquired the land to build the power project in the 1960s and made a commitment to restore and maintain Lansing Manor.

"I think they saw the building's potential as a tourist attraction" says Doris Crasper, a NYPA tour guide who has worked at Lansing Manor for 17 years.

An example of Federal Period architecture, the manor was originally restored by the Power



Lansing Manor renovations in 2002 consisted of interior and exterior decorative work.

Authority in 1977. It is run as an admission-free museum by the Power Authority and the Schoharie County Historical Society. Lansing Manor is open Wednesday-Monday during May-October and is closed on Tuesdays. It was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1975.

Extensive renovations in 2002 consisted of interior and exterior decorative work, including wallpapering and painting, installation of a new, historically correct roof and energy-conservation improvements.

"It shows you exactly what life would have been like at the time the Sutherlands lived there," said Crasper. "It's a history buff's dream come true, but I still meet many people from the area who don't even know it exists."

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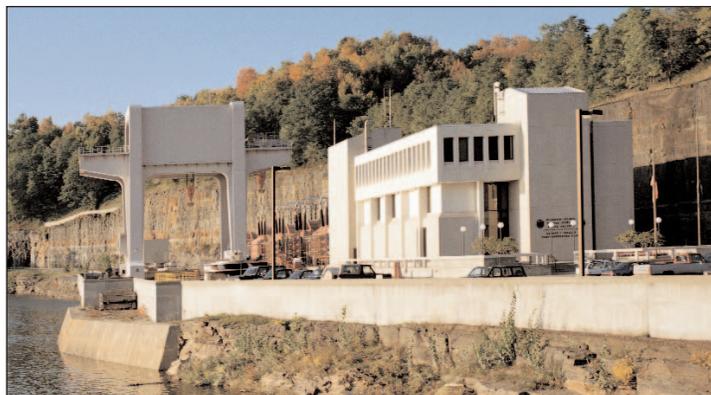
A Long-Term Investment Protects Power Reliability

A complex, \$135 million Life Extension and Modernization (LEM) program at the Blenheim-Gilboa Pumped Storage Power Project will improve the plant's already strong performance in reliably producing power at times of peak consumer demand. The improvements will also strengthen the ability of the project's quick-starting units to respond to power emergencies.

Blenheim-Gilboa helps to meet New York's peak power needs by recycling water between two reservoirs—one atop Brown Mountain and the other at the base.

"Four pump-turbines lift water about 1,200 feet to the upper reservoir at night and on weekends, when power demand and costs are lower," explained Steve DeCarlo, the Power Authority's regional manager, Central New York.

"During daytime hours, the pumps are reversed, and water rushes down vertical shafts and through turbines



A \$135 million modernization program at Blenheim-Gilboa will improve the plant's performance and reliability.

to the lower reservoir, generating electricity during times of greater demand and higher prices."

The LEM will require lowering the water level of the upper reservoir to allow repair and rehabilitation of key 9-foot-diameter spherical valves, which close off the water flow from the upper reservoir to each of four pump-turbine units. The water level

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VN NOTES

Fish, Eagles Near B-G Get Help From State

The wildlife habitat near the Blenheim-Gilboa Power Project is getting assistance on two fronts.

The Power Authority will contribute \$20,000 to the State University of New York (SUNY) at Cobleskill to establish a walleye fish-stocking program for use in part at Blenheim-Gilboa's reservoirs.

The program will also help to train SUNY Cobleskill students in walleye rearing and harvesting, water quality monitoring, and design and construction of fish ponds.

Also this winter, the state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) will construct a nesting platform on a hill near Blenheim-Gilboa to help two bald eagles establish a nest. The pair have lived in the area for several years, but their traditional nest site has become unusable, and nearby trees are too small to support their weight.

The DEC will install the platform high in a tree near the existing site in hopes of assuring the eagles establish a nest this year and produce offspring. ♦



New York Power Authority

UPCOMING EVENTS AT THE BLENHEIM-GILBOA VISITORS CENTER

FEBRUARY

6, 13, 20, 27 Sunday Matinee Movie
19 Winter Festival
22-24 Winter Break Series

MARCH

6, 13, 20, 27 World Travelogue Series
19 Photos with the Easter Bunny

MAY

8 Annual Quilt Show

JUNE

1-30 Annual Doll Show
12 D.A.R.E. Car Show

JULY

17 Schoharie Valley Antique Auto Show

JULY-AUGUST

Headwaters Soccer Camp at Minekill State Park

SEPTEMBER

24 20th Annual Wildlife Festival

Lansing Manor

continued from front

The work included discreet additions of energy-saving heating, ventilation and air-conditioning equipment similar to that installed by the Power Authority at public facilities across New York State.

Now that Lansing Manor has a fresh new look, it has started hosting events of its own, including shows of antique quilts and porcelain dolls.

The manor complex features five period outbuildings, including the land office, which is



The Blenheim-Gilboa visitors center.

used by various community groups for meetings and special events. Plans are currently under way to restore buildings used for a horse barn, a tenant house, slave quarters and a privy and open them to visitors, providing a broader view of 19th-century life.

“The manor represents very prominent housing from that period in American history,” said Crasper. “Restoring the slave quarters and tenant house will give visitors an idea of how less-prominent people lived in pre-Civil War America.”

The Blenheim-Gilboa visitors center itself hosts more than a dozen special events each year, including popular wildlife and harvest festivals in the fall and an antique car show each summer.

Housed in a fully restored 19th-century dairy barn, the visitors center is also admission-free and is open daily except for Christmas and New Year’s Day. The visitors center complex is located on Route 30, about 17 miles south of Middleburgh and five miles north of Grand Gorge. ♦

LEM

continued from front

will be reduced in the reservoir for one month during four consecutive autumns, starting in 2006. During each of these periods, one of the four units will be upgraded and Blenheim-Gilboa will be removed from service.

Also during the LEM, many of the plant’s major mechanical and electrical components will be replaced, and virtually all other parts will be repaired or maintained. For example, the existing pump-turbines will be replaced with modern units, circuit breakers and main power transformers will be replaced, and pump-starting systems will be upgraded to allow one system to start any of the four units.

The power industry’s understanding of fluid dynamics has greatly advanced since Blenheim-Gilboa was commissioned in 1973. Improvements in pump-turbine design and the introduction of specialized stainless-steel components have significantly increased durability and efficiency.

With the new pump-turbines, more electricity can be generated from the same amount of water rushing through the turbines, and more water can be returned to the upper reservoir using the same amount of energy.

The projected improvements in cycle efficiency, pumping flows and range of operation will enable NYPA to reduce its operating costs, increase the storage of energy, in the form of water, and provide greater value to New York’s competitive electricity market.

“There’s ‘new blood’ at Blenheim-Gilboa,” said DeCarlo. “Many of our veterans have retired, and for our staff of 135 men and women, the average age is dropping, although our skill levels remain high. We’ve restructured upper management and have a young but proven crew holding major responsibilities in operations and maintenance.

“We have a reputation for ‘being there’ with a reliable electricity supply, especially in immediate-demand markets. That role has been a source of pride at Blenheim-Gilboa for three decades, and protecting our reputation is our team’s highest priority.” ♦

Welcome to Valley News

Welcome to the first issue of *Valley News*, a community newsletter for residents of the Schoharie Valley.

The New York Power Authority has launched *Valley News* to keep our neighbors up-to-date on activities at our Blenheim-Gilboa Pumped Storage Power Project and its nearby visitors center, as well as on developments around the Valley.

Each issue of *Valley News* will have news and feature stories about people and events, and a calendar of upcoming programs at the Blenheim-Gilboa visitors center, one of the area’s major tourist and activity centers.

Valley News will be published periodically during the year. We hope you enjoy reading it and find it informative.

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions, please contact Steve Ramsey, NYPA’s senior community relations representative, at 518-287-6380, fax 518-287-6381, or steve.ramsey@nypa.gov. ♦

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