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## **GATEWAY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION MARKS 108<sup>th</sup> BIRTHDAY OF PORTAL BRIDGE AND HUDSON RAIL TUNNEL WITH DELAY CAKE Trustees call for end of 21<sup>st</sup> Century economy relying “on the back of century old infrastructure”**

*Historian: 2018 Challenges Similar to Those of 1910*

NEWARK – The Gateway Program Development Corporation today marked the 108<sup>th</sup> anniversary of rail service through the existing tunnel beneath the Hudson River between New York and New Jersey with a cake depicting stalled trains and delayed customers, as well as a presentation from historian Jill Jonnes supporting the new Gateway program.

An engineering triumph when it was built in 1910 by the Pennsylvania Railroad, the North River Tunnel today supports 200,000 daily Amtrak and NJ Transit passenger trips on the modern Northeast Corridor but badly needs replacement due to age and damage suffered during Super Storm Sandy. Losing one of the two tubes would reduce rail capacity by 75% and gridlock the regional transportation network.

The 108<sup>th</sup> anniversary is a reminder of the urgency behind the Portal Bridge and Hudson Tunnel Projects, which call for construction of a new bridge, new tunnel and rehab of the existing tubes. The States of New York and New Jersey as well as the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey have committed more than \$5.5 billion toward the project. The U.S. Department of Transportation is reviewing the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) completed by the partners in an unprecedented 22 months, as well as a funding application through the Federal Transit Administration’s (FTA) New Starts program.

**Jill Jonnes, the historian who documented the epic construction of the tunnel** – an engineering marvel in 1910 – encouraged GDC Trustees to “take heart” in the face of political, financial and other challenges to the modern-day project. “The sheer importance of the project, the inevitability of it – history shows that over time public opinion can turn the tide,” Jonnes said.



“We cannot build a 21<sup>st</sup> century economy on the back of century old infrastructure,” said **Steven M. Cohen, GDC Chairman**. “It’s long past time to remedy this issue – we need the Administration to work with us on moving the project forward as quickly as possible so we can start construction.”

“The hundreds of thousands of New Jersey residents who rely on NJ Transit for access to Manhattan deserve to know that they can reliably make it home on time from work each night,” said **Jerry Zaro, NJ Trustee on the GDC**. “Let’s hope the 108<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this tunnel is one of its last as the single point of failure into and out of New York.”

“When the Pennsylvania Railroad set out to build this tunnel in 1910 a lot of people thought it couldn’t be done,” observed **Tony Coscia, GDC Vice Chairman**. “Today we need to keep their spirit of leadership, ingenuity and persistence alive and remember that we can still get big, important projects done in America.”

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*The Gateway Program is the most urgent infrastructure program in the country – a comprehensive rail investment program that will improve commuter and intercity services, add needed resiliency and create new capacity for the busiest section of the Northeast Corridor (NEC). The NEC is the most heavily used passenger rail line in the country hosting more than 2,200 train movements and 800,000 passenger trips daily. The Gateway Program Development Corporation (GDC) is a New Jersey not-for-profit entity with Board members representing Amtrak and the States of New York and New Jersey. It was incorporated in 2016 to oversee and effectuate the Gateway Program in coordination with federal and local partner agencies. Follow the GDC on Twitter [@GatewayProgNews](https://twitter.com/GatewayProgNews).*