

## Bridge Authority Receives \$1.2 Million for New Fiber Optic Leases

New Fiber Optic leases will generate \$1,240,714 for the NYS Bridge Authority over the next ten years, Authority Executive Director Joseph Ruggiero announced today.

Capitalizing on its critical link across the Hudson, the NYS Bridge Authority has created a type of public-private partnership that uses excess capacity in its fiber optic network to generate additional revenue.

Authority Chairman Richard A. Gerentine said "This new source of money will never replace tolls as our primary tool to maintain our bridges, but everything we can do to reduce costs to the public is an effort well worth making."

Both Verizon and Cablevision recently signed agreements to lease fiber optic cable arranged by **Broadband Consulting Services, Inc.** of Poughkeepsie, NY, on the Bridge Authority's Newburgh-Beacon Bridge, providing access over the Hudson River and a critical pathway for their own fiber optic networks in the region.

"Our mission is to provide safe and reliable bridges for our residents and travelers, along with the lowest responsible toll possible. We do not receive state or federal tax money and pay for the maintenance and operation of these bridges almost exclusively through tolls. Anything we can do that is reasonable to keep those tolls down is good policy," Ruggiero said.

Ruggiero said that innovative programs like fiber optic leasing and the advertising program launched by the

Authority are an important part of being proactive in the face of challenging times. "Government must be more innovative and entrepreneurial to solve our problems. This type of revenue has a long-term benefit to the bottom line," Ruggiero added.

Ruggiero added that additional fiber optic lease opportunities are available throughout the NYSBA system and interested firms should contact the Authority directly.

Ruggiero said these leases are in addition to a \$480,000 lease put in place two years ago, bringing the total revenue due to the Authority to \$1.72 million for the innovative concept.



*Newburgh Beacon Bridge*

The Bridge Authority will continue to expand its ability to generate revenue when appropriate. "When an opportunity presents itself, we'll take a hard look at the costs and the benefits and decide on an individual basis how to proceed. We're very conscience of the historic and cultural significance of our bridges and won't do anything to jeopardize that; but we also have an obligation to the public to explore new and creative ways to pay the bills to keep our bridges among the best maintained in the nation," Ruggiero said.

The NYS Bridge Authority operates the Bear Mountain, Newburgh-Beacon, Mid-Hudson, Kingston-Rhinecliff and Rip Van Winkle vehicular bridges and maintains the structure of the Walkway Over the Hudson bridge.