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PRESS RELEASE

City of Akron Press Release

From the desk of Ellen Lander Nischt, Press Secretary

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Rosie, the Tunnel Boring Machine, Completes Historic Mile-Long Journey under Downtown Akron

Akron, Ohio, August 29, 2018 – Today the City of Akron celebrated as Rosie, the tunnel boring machine, completed her mile-long journey digging the Ohio Canal Interceptor Tunnel (OCIT) under downtown Akron. Rosie’s “big dig” started on October 18, 2017 and the final breakthrough occurred at approximately 12:44 PM this afternoon, marking the dramatic conclusion of the first major phase of tunnel construction.

Once complete, the Ohio Canal Interceptor Tunnel—a project mandated by the EPA and the City’s consent decree—will be 6,211 feet long and 27 feet in diameter. The tunnel is designed to hold 25.6 million gallons of stormwater and sewage during a heavy rain event and control overflows into the Ohio & Erie Canal and Little Cuyahoga River. OCIT is expected to be operational by mid-2019 and control 450 million gallons in a typical year.

“Watching Rosie’s massive cutterhead finally break through that wall was truly amazing. Even for those of us who are not experts in the field, the sheer magnitude and feats of engineering involved in this project should make us all incredibly proud of what this community is accomplishing,” Mayor Dan Horrigan said. “The Ohio Canal Interceptor Tunnel is the largest public improvement project in our City’s history and a significant investment in our environment and infrastructure that will benefit generations of Akronites.”

Akron’s tunnel boring machine (TBM) was christened “Rosie” after Rose May Jacob, Akron’s own Rosie the Riveter, in honor of the hundreds of American women who worked in factories and shipyards to turn out materials and armaments for the Allied war effort during World War II. Rosie features a unique, versatile cutterhead designed to dig through both soft soil and solid rock, making her the first “crossover” TBM to be used in the United States. The machine is 300 feet long and weighs an incredible 2.2 million pounds. To

complete the tunnel, Rosie pushed the cutterhead into the earth at a rate of one inch per minute, with 14.8 million pounds of force—a thrust equivalent to that of 16 space shuttles!

Approximately a thousand citizens joined City officials to celebrate the breakthrough at a public party at Lock 3 downtown. Video of the breakthrough was projected onto a large screen for the crowd to witness in real time. The City provided free food and giveaways, including postcards with information about Rosie and shale fragments excavated from the tunnel. “Rosie Digs Akron” beer was sold at the event and will be available for a limited time at Lock 3, the Thirsty Dog Taphouse and Acme #1 and Acme #15.

More information about Rosie and the OCIT project can be found here. Exclusive video footage and photos of the breakthrough and the tunnel interior will be available here (check back throughout the afternoon, as digital media assets will be added as they become available).

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