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Res. No. 670

Resolution commemorating the 40th anniversary of the opening of the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge.

By Council Members Gentile, Nelson, Avella, Comrie, Fidler, Gennaro, Liu, Recchia, Sanders, Weprin, Jackson, Gonzalez and Lanza

Whereas, The notion of a cross harbor crossing between Brooklyn and Staten Island was discussed as early as 1888, with the idea of constructing a bridge initiated in 1946 and approved by the New State Legislature in 1957; and

Whereas, Construction on the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge began on August 13, 1959, with the upper deck opening to traffic on November 21, 1964 at a cost of approximately 320 million dollars and the lower deck subsequently opening on June 28, 1969; and

Whereas, The Italian Historical Society, under the leadership of John N. LaCorte, led a spirited and lengthy battle that began in 1952 and culminated in 1960 with the signing of a bill by New York State Governor Nelson Rockefeller naming the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge after Giovanni da Verrazano, who in 1524 became the first known European navigator to enter New York Harbor and the Hudson River; and

Whereas, Approximately 12,000 people worked on the bridge, the majority of whom were construction workers from Brooklyn Union 361, Manhattan Union 40 and the “boomers” itinerant union workers; and

Whereas, Upon completion, the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge connected the boroughs of Staten Island and Brooklyn for the first time, and until 1981 held the title as the worlds longest suspension bridge at 4,260 feet at its center span and is currently ranked the 6th longest in the world; and

Whereas, The Verrazano-Narrows Bridge was the last bridge to be designed and constructed by the renown Chief Engineer Othmar Ammann, who also designed the George Washington Bridge, the Bronx-Whitestone Bridge, the Triboro Bridge, the Bayonne Bridge and the Throgs Neck Bridge, and who at eighty-five years of age lived to see the dedication of his final work and who in 1965 was awarded first prize by the American Institute of Steel Construction for the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge; and

Whereas, Unique construction techniques were utilized to build the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge, including the road deck, which featured vertical stiffening trusses and lateral braces, and where the keystone piece of the deck was built mid-span and proceeded towards the anchorages, helping to keep the towers at a distance of 4,260 feet and as erect as possible while preventing the distortion of the cables that suspend the bridge; and

Whereas, Currently, approximately 190,000 vehicles a day cross the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge, almost four times the number that crossed the bridge in 1965 when an estimated 48,000 cars a day crossed the bridge; and

Whereas, The Verrazano-Narrows Bridge is easily recognizable on the New York City skyline and is the opening of the world-renowned New York City Marathon; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York commemorates the 40th anniversary of the opening of the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge.

ST/RA-examined
11/5/2004
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