

## 2009-J25

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commemorating the 200th Anniversary of the Town of Bethel

WHEREAS, It is the intent of this Legislative Body to honor and commemorate the proud and distinguished histories of the communities which comprise the noble body of this great Empire State; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, it is the sense of this Legislative Body to now commemorate the 200th Anniversary of the Town of Bethel, New York; and

WHEREAS, The great Town of Bethel is located in the center of Sullivan County, New York; it is only 90 miles northwest of New York City and 20 miles from the famous Delaware River; the population of 4,362 expands to about 10,000 during the summer season due to its abundance of beautiful lakes, excellent fishing areas, and recreation programs; and

WHEREAS, On March 27, 1809, by an Act of Legislature, a large portion of land was separated from the territory of Lumberland and designated as the Town of Bethel; the Leni-Lenape Indians were the first inhabitants; among the first settlers were John, George, and Peter Pintler, from Sussex, New Jersey, who set up their homestead in 1798, between what is now known as White Lake and Bethel; and

WHEREAS, By 1810, several settlements were set up in different parts of the Town including Hurd Settlement, Fraser Settlement, Briscoe, North White Lake, Bushville, and Stephenville; with the completion of the Newburgh-Cochecton Turnpike (now Rt. 17B) more hamlets sprouted along and near its route including Mongaup Mill, Black Lake, Moscoe, White Lake, and Bethel; in 1810, the first town meeting was held with John Conklin as Supervisor; and

WHEREAS, The settlers who came to Bethel were industrious and enterprising; farm land was immediately cleared and sawmills, grist mills,

and tanneries were quickly established; in the mid 1800s, the construction of hotels began; most were developed from farmhouses which were turned into boarding houses; Hotel Rita, The Mansion House, Gray's, the Kenmore, and the Empire House were all located around the lake and successful into the 1940s; and

WHEREAS, In 1928, A. N. Smallwood started to develop into a summer retreat of "log cabins" land once farmed by families with names such as Gabriel, Ballard, and VanKeuren; he called it Mountain Lakes but it soon became Smallwood after its founder; what was once a bustling summer resort is now, for many, a year-round residence; and

WHEREAS, In the 1960s other summer home communities emerged including the White Lake Homes and the Beechwoods, located on the White Lake; today, several of these homes are used as year-round residences and other second-home communities have developed including The Chapin Estate, The Highlands at Bethel, Bethel Farms, Black Lake Estates, Oxford Estates, Gina Homes, Jenna Estates, Tallwood Estates, and Crestwood Mountain Farms; and

WHEREAS, In July 1969, the Sullivan County International Airport began operation; today, there is no carrier although private planes and jets fly in and out of the beautiful airport; visitors may watch the planes from the picnic area which is open during the warmer months; and

WHEREAS, In August 1969, the Town of Bethel became the equivalent to the third largest city in New York State overnight due to the Woodstock Festival, three days and nights of peace and music, a truly unique historical event that caught the attention of the entire world; currently, there is a monument at the site listing the performers; and

WHEREAS, In the Spring of 1997, Alan Gerry, a Liberty businessman, purchased the original site as well as numerous amounts of acreage

around and nearby the site for development of a music and arts center; it is now known as the Bethel Woods Performing Arts Center and Museum; in 1998, Alan Gerry's company G.F. Entertainment hosted the Day in the

Garden, which was a successful three day concert; and

WHEREAS, Since 1996, the Town of Bethel has had an economic development rebirth; many businesses have located in Bethel especially along the Rt. 17B corridor and plans are in the works for more; the Sullivan County Industrial Park is also located in Bethel and has two businesses, Sutphen East and Grisar Automobiles; Sutphen East manufactures fire trucks; Grisar Automobiles produces kit cars; and

WHEREAS, From the day of tanneries, sawmills, and grist mills, the Town of Bethel has continued to progress while maintaining its small town feel; many country stores, farms, and other businesses still remain, some dating back to 1901; and

WHEREAS, Remaining fruitful over the ebb and flow of decades of growth and change, the Town of Bethel continues its commitment to enhancing the quality of life of its citizens, ensuring a positive business, institutional and educational climate, and providing all essential services; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 200th Anniversary of the Town of Bethel, recognizing the significance of the role it continues to play in the life of the community of the State of New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the Town of Bethel.