

2015-J6263

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commemorating the 175th Anniversary of the Saratoga County Agricultural Society in Ballston Spa, New York

WHEREAS, The state's agricultural societies work to preserve and enhance agriculture, farming and related businesses in New York through educational, informational, and promotional programs, as well as by holding fairs and festivals that empower communities to attract new visitors and capitalize on local commercial and cultural value; and

WHEREAS, It is the practice of this Legislative Body to recognize and support organizations of significance which contribute to the education, entertainment and vitality of the communities they serve and which exemplify the history and development of the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 175th Anniversary of the Saratoga County Agricultural Society in Ballston Spa, New York; this auspicious milestone will be recognized on Tuesday, July 19, 2016, and will celebrate the history, traditions and legacy of this renowned organization; and

WHEREAS, Formed in Ballston Spa in 1841, the Saratoga County Agricultural Society presents the Saratoga County Fair each year which pre-dates most of the agricultural fairs in New York State and even the nation; and

WHEREAS, Guided by a 21-member Board of Directors, the Saratoga County Agricultural Society is an organization made up entirely of volunteers, a few dozen volunteer ad hoc teams, and a small group of employees who work varying schedules throughout the year; and

WHEREAS, The founding fathers of the Saratoga County Agricultural Society represented each Town in Saratoga County, with the first President of the Society being Howell Gardiner of Greenfield; Gardiner was

also a Justice of the Peace for two decades, was elected to the New York State Assembly three times between 1815 and 1831, and was also a member of the Electoral College, casting his vote for James Monroe to be the 5th U.S. President; his involvement in the Saratoga County Agricultural Society over 17 decades ago set the stage for active participation by government representatives, business leaders, educators, and agricultur-
alists today; and

WHEREAS, During its first 50 years, the Fair was hosted by Ballston Spa, Mechanicville, and Saratoga Springs; one of the two Saratoga City locations, Glen Mitchell, featured its own rail spur and hotel in the area just off North Broadway which is roughly where the Maple Avenue Middle School is located today; finally, in the late 1880s, the Fair's location was permanently established high above the Village of Ballston Spa where the Saratoga County Agricultural Society owns and maintains almost 80 acres of exposition and parking facilities in Saratoga County; and

WHEREAS, Many individuals and families associated with the Fair throughout its history were also influential in the development of Saratoga County in general including the Curtis, Merchant, Wiswall, West, McGregor, Collamer, Batchellor, Kilmer, Ellsworth, Vischer, King, Middlebrook, MacElroy, Droms, and Clements families; the Fair's historical records reveal many prominent individuals whose names today identify current roads, landmarks, buildings and destinations throughout Saratoga County; and

WHEREAS, Involvement in the Saratoga County Fair is a true family tradition; names that have been associated with the Fair for many generations include Merchant, Middlebrook, Curtis, and Armer, to name a few;

currently, there has been an Armer family member on the board of Directors since the mid-1940s; and

WHEREAS, The Saratoga County Agricultural Society is dedicated to not only showcasing the accomplishments of each year's participants in a

wide range of competitions, but also in serving as an educational resource about the history of Saratoga County and offering a glimpse into its future; and

WHEREAS, Not only does the Saratoga County Fair offer rides, games, demo derbies, tractor pulls, exhibitions, chainsaw carvers, musical entertainment, culinary demonstrations, local crafters, athletic and animal competitions, myriad choices of food and more, but participants become part of a tradition that spans over eight generations of Saratoga County families; and

WHEREAS, Today, under the luminous direction of President Chuck Curtiss, the Saratoga County Agricultural Society serves as a vital institution and continues to leave its indelible imprint on the history of New York State; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize the significant impact that the Saratoga County Agricultural Society has had on individuals and families, and the invaluable experiences, services, entertainment, educational and cultural enrichment it has provided to residents of the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, In recognition of the Saratoga County Agricultural Society's rich legacy and enduring contribution to the heritage of the State of New York, it is the intent of this Legislative Body to join in the celebration to ensure that present and future generations may come to appreciate the unique significance which its history plays in the progression of our State and Nation's evolution; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 175th Anniversary of the Saratoga County Agricultural Society in Ballston Spa, New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the Saratoga County Agricultural Society President Chuck Curtiss, Vice President Tammy Ballestero, Secretary Jennifer Flinton, Treasurer Bill Schwerd, and Executive Director Jeff Townsend.