



Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge Authority

One East Shore Road | P.O. Box 437 | Jamestown, Rhode Island 02835-0437

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 28, 2019

RITBA CELEBRATES NEWPORT PELL BRIDGE 50TH ANNIVERSARY

JAMESTOWN, R.I. – Today, [The Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge Authority \(RITBA\)](#) celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the Newport Pell Bridge, officially opening to traffic exactly fifty years ago on June 28th 1969. The Newport Bridge is an 11,250-foot-long water crossing of the East Passage of Narragansett Bay and remains the longest suspension bridge in New England. This ionic bridge has played a vital role and serves as an invaluable asset in the state.

To honor the bridge, RITBA and the 50th Anniversary Committee led by Chairman Evan Smith, planned a full day of celebrations. The day commenced with a ribbon cutting ceremony at the toll plaza with several state and local officials in attendance.

Following the ribbon cutting event, attendees traveled over the red, white and blue balloon lined bridge for an official rededication ceremony that took place at Gurney's Newport Resort and Marina. Emceed by Committee Chairman Evan Smith, speakers included Senator Sheldon Whitehouse, Congressman David Cicilline, Ms. Dallas Pell, Mr. Zechariah Chafee, Chairman of the RITBA Board Stephen C. Waluk, as well as Executive Director at The Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge Authority, Buddy Croft. Those in attendance included state & local officials and numerous civic leaders including Naval offices, representatives from the towns of Newport and Jamestown and RITBA Stakeholders.

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As part of the closing remarks Buddy Croft, Executive Director at the Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge Authority stated “when I look at the Newport Pell Bridge, I see an engineering marvel and the thousands of men and women who worked so hard, for so long, to design, engineer, and build this magnificent structure.”

The 50th Anniversary celebrations will continue through the evening with an event open to the public at Fort Adams State Park. The evening will consist of food, music, fun and fireworks. The celebration will start at 6 p.m., which will include a concert from the local band “Take it to the Bridge.” There will be food trucks available to purchase from, in addition families are welcomed to bring picnics. The celebration will end with fireworks which will begin at 9:15 p.m.

No toll dollars or fuel tax dollars were used to fund any 50th Anniversary celebrations or events. All funding was raised through private donations.

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