



The Delaware River and Bay Authority

PRESS RELEASE

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DRBA Celebrates 50 Years of the Twin Span

Delaware Memorial Bridge's Second Structure Dedicated on September 12, 1968

NEW CASTLE, Del. – Today, Governor John Carney of Delaware, Congressman Frank LoBiondo of New Jersey and Delaware River and Bay Authority (DRBA) officials joined together to commemorate 50 years of the Twin Span. The second span, which is the Delaware-bound Bridge and constructed at a cost of \$70 million, opened to traffic and much fanfare on this date in 1968. Today, the Delaware Memorial Bridge Twin Span is a vital transportation link in the eastern corridor of the United States, handling more than 36 million vehicles that cross it annually.

“The Delaware Memorial Bridge Twin Span is more than a concrete and steel structure soaring over the Delaware River,” said James N. Hogan, Chairman of the DRBA. “This engineering marvel is an eternal, living memorial to those valiant men and women from the States of New Jersey and Delaware who gave their lives for our freedoms. We’re proud of the history, legacy and role that these bridges have had on our region and its economic vitality.”

“Whether transporting goods and services, traveling for a family vacation or commuting to work, millions of people rely on these bridges daily to get to their destination,” noted Executive Director Tom Cook. “As we remember and celebrate fifty years of making possible these daily connections, it is my hope that we also think about Vice President Hubert Humphrey’s message that day at the dedication, ‘We must build new bridges – not just bridges of concrete and steel, but of tolerance, understanding and cooperation.’ Those words are as true today as they were in 1968.”

During today’s ceremony, the DRBA Commission recognized and honored the bi-state agency’s first Executive Director, William J. Miller, Jr. With his extensive experience in bridges and highways, Mr. Miller was a natural to be the first Executive Director of the newly formed Delaware River and Bay Authority in 1963. Under his direction and leadership, the second span of the Delaware Memorial Bridge was planned, financed, and constructed. The Twin Span is world renowned for its innovative design and construction. During the Authority’s formative years, Mr. Miller also championed the launch of the Cape May Lewes Ferry as a key transportation link between the States of Delaware and New Jersey. Mr. Miller retired on December 31, 1991.

“The Delaware Memorial Bridge provides Delawareans and visitors easy access to major highways, tax-free shopping, businesses in Downtown Wilmington and attractions along Wilmington Riverfront,”

said Governor John Carney. "We are proud of its significance in making Delaware more accessible for the past fifty years, and we look forward to continuing to work together with New Jersey and the Delaware River and Bay Authority."

"The critical role the Delaware Memorial Bridge plays in the daily lives of South Jersey residents and New Jersey's economy cannot be overstated," said Congressman Frank LoBiondo (NJ-02). "From interstate commerce to allow families to visit the Jersey Shore, there is no calculating the countless benefits the Mid-Atlantic region has enjoyed. I applaud the foresight of New Jersey and Delaware five decades ago and its continued partnership for the next fifty years."

Mr. First strikes again. Omero C. Catan of Teaneck New Jersey was the first paying customer across the second span, closely following the motorcade parade led by Vice President Humphrey. Mr. Catan was a fan of toll facilities and held the honor of being the first paying customer at numerous bridge and tunnel openings, including at the original span of Delaware Memorial Bridge 17 years earlier. When the second span opened, the Delaware Memorial Bridge was the longest twin suspension bridge in the world and was cited as one of the 10 outstanding engineering achievements of 1968 by the National Society of Professional Engineers.

A few days following the dedication ceremony, the original span of the Delaware Memorial Bridge was closed for a major overhaul. The bridge's original suspender ropes were replaced, the median barrier removed and a new bridge deck constructed to allow for four unseparated northbound traffic lanes. On December 29, 1969, the Delaware Memorial Bridge's eight lanes were finally completed and opened to the travelling public.

Today, the Delaware Memorial Bridge handles more vehicles in an hour than it did during an entire day in 1951 when the first bridge opened. In 2009, the bridge, 3,650 feet long with a center span of 2,150 feet, recorded its largest single day of traffic volume on November 29 when 79,488 vehicles (one-way) passed through the toll plaza. The Twin Span registered its one billionth toll transaction as Jeff Wright of Wildwood, New Jersey passed through toll lane 2 on December 12, 2012 at 11:59 a.m.

About the Delaware River and Bay Authority

The DRBA, a bi-state governmental agency created by Compact in 1962, owns and operates the Delaware Memorial Bridge, the Cape May- Lewes Ferry, and the Forts Ferry Crossing. The DRBA also manages corporate and aviation properties through its economic development powers - two airports in New Jersey (Millville Airport and Cape May Airport) and three in Delaware (New Castle Airport, Civil Air Terminal and Delaware Airpark). All DRBA operating revenues are generated through the bridge, ferry and airport facilities. For more information, visit www.drba.net.

Wreath Ceremony91218.jpg: DRBA employees participate in a wreath ceremony at center span of the second span to remember and honor construction workers who died building the span and employees who passed away in the line of duty since 1968. Pictured (left –right) are Darin Crist of the maintenance department; Monica Creamer representing administration; Sgt. Jody Hauck of the police department ; Michael Lindsay of the toll department; and Jay Jones who has served the agency for 43 years.

Vintage Cars 91218.jpg: More than 20 vintage cars prepare to re-enact the 1968 parade across the Twin Span. The parade momentarily stopped at center span of the bridge for the ceremonial wreath toss. Special thanks to the following car clubs: AACA Woodstown, Nostalgia Knight, Rolling Rods, SJ

Cruisers, SJ Mustang Club, SJ Pontiac Club, Road Knights, 1 State Mustang Club, Delco Cruisers, Cruising Classic, and Marconi Cars.

DMBCustomer_\$250.jpg: Robert and Kim Cummings of Medford, New Jersey, were recognized as the first customer of the next fifty years and received \$250 on their E-ZPass account. Robert, a Vietnam Veteran, and his wife, Kim, were heading to Baltimore, Maryland to visit with their daughter who is expecting her first child. In the photo (from left-right) are Toll Collector Cindy Bunitsky; DRBA Deputy Executive Director Stephen Williams; DRBA Executive Director Tom Cook; Kim Cummings and her husband, Robert; DRBA Commissioner Michael Ratchford; and DRBA Chairman Jim Hogan.

MillerPlaque_91218.jpg: Delaware Governor John Carney holds the microphone for the Authority's first Executive Director, William J. Miller, Jr., as he expresses his appreciation to the Delaware River and Bay Authority for the special recognition plaque at today's ceremony. Also in the photo are (l-r) Bill Miller's son, Bill; DRBA Chairman Jim Hogan; DRBA Executive Director Tom Cook; and N.J. Congressman Frank LoBiondo