



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

George D. Maziarz

## Wallenda visits Niagara Falls to discuss high wire walk

GEORGE D. MAZIARZ August 3, 2011

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Productive discussions between famed high wire performer Nik Wallenda and state and local officials in New York continued today during a meeting held at the Top of the Falls Restaurant located within Niagara Falls State Park. Wallenda and a team of his advisors laid out plans and answered questions from American officials about how a high wire walk above Niagara Falls could be accomplished logistically. Earlier this year, the New York State Legislature approved legislation allowing Wallenda to perform such a walk.

Nik Wallenda said, “After today’s meeting, I’m more excited than ever about this walk. This will be a highlight in my career, and I’m thankful for all of the stakeholders who are contributing to our planning discussions. I recognize that this may be a once-in-a-century opportunity, and I want to do it right. There are a lot of logistical facets to consider, but I’m confident that we can all work together to make this an amazing success. I’m the guy up on the wire, but this will be a team effort.”

Governmental representatives invited to the meeting included state, county, and city elected officials; representatives of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation; and emergency management personnel, including representatives from the New York State Park Police,

Niagara Falls Police Department, and Niagara Falls Fire Department.

Senator George Maziarz (R-C, Newfane), sponsor of the bill to permit Wallenda's high wire walk (S.4844-A/A.8206-A) in the Senate, said, "Today's meeting was an opportunity to get down to the nuts and bolts of how we can pull this event off. Safety, security, engineering—these are all critical elements of a big, international event such as this. I commend Nick and his team for making themselves available to answer questions, take feedback, and forge ahead. If done right, this will be a signature event that the world will remember for a long time to come."

Senator Maziarz noted that the event has already received widespread attention from media outlets such as the *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, National Public Radio, *London Daily Telegraph*, the BBC, and more.

Senator Mark Grisanti (R-C-I, Buffalo) said, "This event will put Niagara Falls in the national and international spotlight. I look forward to this event and it will be exciting for all residents and tourists to attend. I was glad to participate in today's meeting and I think this is something positive that we can accomplish for the region."

"During today's meeting with officials from the state parks department, I stressed the importance of the high-wire event as a catalyst for growing the region's tourism industry and the significance this performance will have on highlighting the Falls as a global destination for tourism," said Assemblyman John Ceretto (R-I, Lewiston), a cosponsor of the legislation that would enable the Wallenda walk to occur in his district. "While no one believes this event will be a cure-all for the local economy, the positive publicity Nik Wallenda will bring to the Niagara Falls area will help showcase it as a preeminent area for attractions and will help us compete on a global level for tourism dollars, ultimately leading to economic growth and job creation."

Assemblyman Dennis Gabryszak (D, Cheektowaga), who sponsored the 'Wallenda legislation' in the Assembly, said, "The tourism industry is a leading force in Niagara Falls and across Western New York, and we're committed to making it stronger. Tourism leads to economic development which will help create jobs in our region. We need to keep heading in that direction, and that's why our efforts to bring Nik Wallenda to our region are important."

Tomorrow Wallenda will meet with parks officials on the Canadian side of Niagara Falls who also must give their approval.

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