

2015-J6162

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION honoring Wilkens Fruit and Fir Farm upon the occasion of celebrating its 100th Anniversary

WHEREAS, The State of New York takes great pride in acknowledging significant milestones in the distinguished histories of its esteemed entities; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to honor Wilkens Fruit and Fir Farm upon the occasion of celebrating its 100th Anniversary; and

WHEREAS, Wilkens Fruit and Fir Farm was founded in 1916 by John Wilkens, his sister Anna Wilkens, and Jeremiah Murphy; and

WHEREAS, Wilkens Fruit and Fir Farm began as a 71-acre all-purpose farm including cattle, apples, and peaches; and

WHEREAS, John Wilkens worked tirelessly to develop the farm and build barns which still exist on the property, while Jeremiah Murphy purchased an additional 105 acres; and

WHEREAS, A cider mill was added in the 1920s; profits from hard cider sales were used by John and Anna Wilkens to pay off the mortgage to Jeremiah Murphy, and they gained full ownership of the land in 1926; and

WHEREAS, After expansion of its apple and peach orchards, the farm began to sell its produce wholesale to local farmers in the 1930s; and

WHEREAS, The farm also grew grapes, strawberries, and corn, as well as raised chickens; and

WHEREAS, Wilkens Fruit and Fir Farm became a valuable local employer in the 1940s and 1950s, when it began to hire workers to pick apples and work in the cider mill; and

WHEREAS, John Wilkens passed away in 1966 and his nephew, Johnny Wilkens, and his wife, Barbara Keller Wilkens, began running the business and the farm; and

WHEREAS, Wilkens Fruit and Fir Farm opened as a Pick-Your-Own farm in

1968; and

WHEREAS, Christmas trees were planted in the early 1970s and were first sold on a Cut-Your-Own basis in 1976; and

WHEREAS, Johnny Wilkens passed away in 1997; Randy Pratt and his wife, Barbie Wilkens Pratt, took over operation of the farm as third generation owners with fourth generation family members helping; and

WHEREAS, After adding pick-your-own pumpkins, new orchards of apples and peaches were added in the 2000s and five different varieties of grape were planted in 2010 to make wine; the winery is scheduled to open in Fall of 2016; and

WHEREAS, Today, Wilkens Fruit and Fir Farm offers peaches, plums, nectarines, pears, over 40 varieties of apples, pumpkins, and Douglas and Fraser Fir Christmas trees for harvest; and

WHEREAS, It is with great pleasure that this Legislative Body acknowledges the success of this exceptional family and its contributions to the local and State economies, fully confident that it will continue to enjoy the sparkling successes it has experienced thus far; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor Wilkens Fruit and Fir Farm upon the occasion of celebrating its 100th Anniversary; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Randy Pratt and Barbie Wilkens Pratt.