

2017-K533

Assembly Resolution No. 533

BY: M. of A. Woerner

COMMENDING the Round Lake Davis-Ferris Organ upon the occasion of its designation as a National Historic Landmark

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to support the preservation and commemoration of historical landmarks which express and preserve the social and cultural origins of this great 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 commend the Round Lake Davis-Ferris Organ upon the occasion of its designation as a National Historic Landmark to be celebrated at an event on Saturday, June 10, 2017, at the Round Lake Auditorium, in Round Lake, New York; and

WHEREAS, This auspicious occasion includes a hands-on program for children, tours inside the organ, and an informational exhibit about the historic Village of Round Lake; throughout the day, renowned organists will demonstrate a range of beautiful music on this massive 170 year-old instrument; and

WHEREAS, Recently, the Davis-Ferris Organ in the Round Lake Auditorium has been designated a National Historic Landmark, believed to

be the first such honor for any organ in North America; and

WHEREAS, The organ is one of 24 new selections of historic properties deemed to be of exceptional value to the nation, ensuring future generations have the ability to learn from the past as we preserve and protect the historic value of these properties; and

WHEREAS, In 1868, Round Lake was founded as a "camp meeting" town, with as many as 20,000 people gathering to hear rousing summer sermons; by the late 1800s, the town evolved into a Chautauqua-styled educational resort, complete with hotels, museums, and lecture halls; and

WHEREAS, Round Lake's literal and figurative center was the Round Lake Auditorium; from a rough platform in a tree grove, it grew to an open-sided building with canvas flaps, and, in 1912, to the glass-enclosed pavilion we see today; after falling into ruin by the 1950s, and nearly bulldozed, the Auditorium is now lovingly restored with modern amenities, creating a cultural venue of rustic architectural beauty; the Auditorium is one of 53 sites to receive a Save America's Treasures grant; and

WHEREAS, The Auditorium's crown jewel is a Gothic Revival-cased Tracker organ; built in 1847, by a New York organ-building partnership known as Davis & Ferris, it was the second largest organ in New York City, and is now the oldest, largest and unaltered of its kind in the United States; and

WHEREAS, The organ was relocated in 1888 to the Round Lake Auditorium by Giles Beach, an organbuilder from Gloversville, New York; and

WHEREAS, The tracker system has been in existence for over 600 years

and is one of the earliest All-American built organs; its beautiful sound is produced by the use of zinc and wooden pipes which cannot be reproduced electronically; the pipes are designed to duplicate other musical instruments and to substitute for a symphony orchestra; and

WHEREAS, Some of the organ's pipes are large enough for a small child to crawl through and some small enough to be a child's whistle; thin ribbon-like wooden trackers connect the parts, while an electric blower provides the wind power to make the sound; and

WHEREAS, A Ferris Tracker Organ concert at Round Lake Auditorium is more than a concert, it is a chance to visit the past in sight and music; the sounds are enhanced by the artistry of the player, bringing the audience a variety of styles, including folk, classical, popular, and symphonic music, normally not associated with organ music; and

WHEREAS, While the instrument has had mechanical changes, virtually all of the sounding portions of the instrument are intact, providing us a living record of what a large urban organ of the time sounded like to its original listeners; and

WHEREAS, In recognition of the Round Lake Davis-Ferris Organ's rich history 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 of its designation as a National Historic Landmark so 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 commend the Round Lake Davis-Ferris Organ upon the occasion of its designation as a National Historic Landmark; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the Village of Round Lake.