



**For Immediate Release: November 27, 2024**

**\*Photos and video available upon request.**

## **NEW YORK STATE BRIDGE AUTHORITY CELEBRATES 100 YEARS OF THE BEAR MOUNTAIN BRIDGE**

***Iconic Hudson Valley Suspension Bridge Opened to Traffic on November 27, 1924***

***First Vehicular Crossing Over the Hudson River South of Albany***

***Longest Suspended Central Span in the World at Time of Opening***

An engineering marvel of the 1920s has now entered its second century of service. The New York State Bridge Authority (NYSBA) announced that the Bear Mountain Bridge, the first Hudson River vehicular crossing south of Albany, is officially 100 years old.

The Bear Mountain Bridge was originally dedicated on November 26, 1924 and opened to the general public a day later on Thanksgiving Day, November 27, 1924. It was a groundbreaking engineering achievement for its time, as the first Hudson River vehicular bridge in the region and the first suspension bridge with a concrete deck. For a brief period, it also held the title of "bridge with the longest suspended central span in the world." Many consider the innovations with the Bear Mountain Bridge to have spurred a boom in bridge building in New York State and the entire country in the years following.

The bridge was originally built by a private enterprise, the Bear Mountain Hudson River Bridge Company. It was constructed in less than two years without a single loss of life. In September 1940, the New York State Bridge Authority acquired the bridge, making it NYSBA's southernmost bridge. In 2018, the span received the ceremonial designation of *Purple Heart Veterans Memorial Bear Mountain Bridge*. Today, the bridge is often considered a symbol of the Hudson Valley and is arguably one of the region's most photographed structures. It serves as the Hudson River crossing for the Appalachian Trail and as a gateway to nearby state parks and recreational lands.

**New York State Bridge Authority Executive Director Dr. Minosca Alcantara said,** "Right on the cusp of this year's Thanksgiving holiday, the Bridge Authority gives thanks for 100 years of this magnificent bridge! We are equally grateful to the staff, past and

present, who have meticulously cared for this span over the years, ensuring it can stand strong ten decades later.”

**New York State Bridge Authority Board of Commissioners Chair Joan McDonald said,** “A symbol of human ingenuity, the Bear Mountain Bridge was the forerunner of many suspension bridges in the region and beyond. The Board of Commissioners is honored to be a part of this incredible milestone and is committed to maintaining this iconic structure for generations to come.”

NYSBA marked the occasion with a brief ceremony on Sunday, November 24, featuring a brass quintet from the West Point Band and a ceremonial motorcade with cars and motorcycles from throughout the decades. As an homage to the original dedication ceremony in 1924, a new centennial plaque was unveiled that will be installed on the side of the bridge’s Administration Building. This new plaque celebrates the Bear Mountain Bridge, honoring “the innovators who built it, the hard working men and women who maintain it, and the people who cross it every day.”

Leadership from partner agencies also joined the day’s activities celebrating this momentous occasion.

**New York State Parks Commissioner Pro Tem Randy Simons said,** “Congratulations to the Bear Mountain Bridge, a nationally important feat of engineering and construction, for reaching this impressive milestone. I commend the New York Bridge Authority for its work to preserve and celebrate this distinctive piece of New York’s heritage, and look forward to a continued partnership with our agency to help people access and enjoy so many beloved destinations in the Hudson Valley.”

### **Recap of Celebratory Activities**

The Bridge Authority hosted and supported a number of events since April 2023 to celebrate the bridge centennial, including:

- a time capsule dedication to commemorate the start of construction;
- a website devoted to the centennial, [www.nysba.ny.gov/bmb100](http://www.nysba.ny.gov/bmb100), with archival materials and information about centennial-related events;
- opportunities for the public to share photos and memories of the bridge on social media using the hashtag #BMB100;
- a recreation of the end of BMB construction photograph from 1924, sponsored by Historic Bridges of the Hudson Valley (HBHV) and featuring NYSBA staff, retirees and local partners;
- celebratory banners hung at all NYSBA facilities;
- light pole banners at the bridge sponsored by New York Stewart International Airport and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey;
- a Purple Heart Day breakfast for veterans, in homage to the bridge’s ceremonial name also sponsored in part by HBHV;
- a paint and learn event at Fort Montgomery State Historic Site;

- “Bridges to Parks” hike at the bridge and nearby facilities operated by New York State Parks;
- online pop-up shops featuring BMB100-themed merchandise;
- an international bridge engineering conference at West Point, with the bridge centennial as a focal point; and
- a documentary, created and produced by HBHV, Bear Mountain Bridge; the First 100 Years, which premiered at the Paramount Theater in Peekskill on Nov. 24.

**New York Stewart International Airport General Manager Omar Astacio** said, “The Bear Mountain Bridge is an integral gateway to opportunity and exploration for the Hudson Valley, just as we try to be at New York Stewart International Airport. The Port Authority is proud to play a part in marking the 100th birthday of this iconic crossing, and we look forward to the next 100 years in our shared mission of connecting people, commerce, and communities across our region.”

#### **About the New York State Bridge Authority**

The New York State Bridge Authority operates the Bear Mountain, Newburgh-Beacon, Mid-Hudson, Kingston-Rhinecliff and Rip Van Winkle Bridges. It also owns and maintains the structure of the Walkway Over the Hudson pedestrian bridge. The Authority receives no operating funding through state or federal tax dollars, with nearly all of its revenue coming through tolls. Tolls are reinvested back into capital improvements on the Authority's spans, ensuring these critical pieces of infrastructure can continue serving the Hudson Valley for decades to come.

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