

BY: Senator STEC

COMMEMORATING the 50th Anniversary of the
Adirondack Balloon Festival

WHEREAS, Fairs and festivals empower communities to attract new visitors while capitalizing on local commercial and cultural value; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize and support events of significance which contribute to the entertainment and vitality of the communities they serve, and which exemplify the history and development of the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, In the early 1970s Warren County's tourism and publicity office was looking for an idea for an event which would bring visitors to the region after Labor Day; at that time, there were relatively few hot air balloons in the nation; one such balloonist, John Marsden from Manchester, Vermont, shared photos of his balloon with some visionary Glens Falls residents, which included Walter Grishkot, and the Adirondack Balloon Festival was born shortly thereafter; and

WHEREAS, The early days of the Festival were held at Adirondack Community College, now known as SUNY Adirondack; as the event grew, a larger site was needed to accommodate the growing number of balloons and spectators; that new site was the Floyd Bennett Memorial Airport in Queensbury, New York, where it continues to be held today; and

WHEREAS, Since its inception, this not-for-profit organization has never charged the public to witness this magnificent site; and

WHEREAS, Throughout the years, the event has drawn international exposure for the Glens Falls region with relationships being formed with cities like Saga, Japan and Gatineau, Quebec; the event traditionally draws balloonists from across the United States but also internationally based pilots; and

WHEREAS, From its humble beginnings, the event currently draws upwards of 100,000 people over four days; the Festival has been named one of the Top 100 events in North America and has received accolades from the Weather Channel, Food Network and media coverage including numerous **Associated Press** articles as well as **New York Times**, Amtrak and Southwest Airlines; and

WHEREAS, After the death of founder Walter Grishkot in 2011, a foundation was set up in his memory to raise funds to promote interest in education in the sciences of aviation and aerospace; in the summer of 2021, his wife Joan also passed away, leaving a hole in the hearts of all those who diligently work each year to make the Festival a success; and

WHEREAS, Today, the Adirondack Balloon Festival continues to serve as an extraordinary attraction, bringing thousands of people each year

to see what it has to offer; and

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize and commend those organizations that have brought entertainment and cultural enrichment to the citizens of the State of New York; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Adirondack Balloon Festival; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of the Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the Adirondack Balloon Festival.