

BY: Senator WEBB

COMMEMORATING the 50th Anniversary of Kopernik
Observatory & Science Center of Vestal, New York

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize those businesses who work to enrich the lives of the citizens of the State of New York through its exceptional cultural, educational, and recreational institutions; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of Kopernik Observatory & Science Center of Vestal, New York; and

WHEREAS, The Kopernik Observatory & Science Center opened in 1974, and was built by the Kopernik Society of Broome County to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the birth of Mikolaj Kopernik, the man known to the world as Copernicus - the "father" of modern astronomy; and

WHEREAS, The Kopernik Observatory & Science Center is the first science laboratory facility in New York State designed for K-12 teachers, students, and their families; its mission is to offer hands-on investigations using advanced telescopes, computers, and other tools, encouraging the discovery of the wonders of the universe; and

WHEREAS, Located atop a 1,740-foot hill in Vestal, NY, 13 miles southwest of Binghamton, the Kopernik Observatory & Science Center has grown from a humble start, owning two telescope domes and a single classroom, to now being the most-cited and best-equipped public observatory in the Northeast United States for nearly 50 years; and

WHEREAS, The facilities and resources available to the Kopernik Observatory & Science Center include: observatory telescopes, over 12 portable telescopes, including one that is wheelchair-accessible, Heliostat solar telescope, a high-resolution CCD camera and filter set, Herschel wedge and other solar filters, photovoltaic array, a true color 3D projector, computer lab, space science lab, physics/laser lab, Earth science lab, weather station, amateur radio station (K2ZRO), 24 acres of land, and a portable planetarium; and

WHEREAS, Additionally, Kopernik Science Park was officially unveiled to the public in October of 2020; the park teaches children about science, astronomy, and the environment through play; and

WHEREAS, The Kopernik Observatory & Science Center is also the home to the Kopernik Astronomical Society (KAS), a group of dedicated observational astronomers; visitors to the observatory often will find KAS volunteers helping at Kopernik programs; and

WHEREAS, The Kopernik Observatory & Science Center has hosted hundreds of speakers who have shared their knowledge on a multitude of

science and technology related topics over their impressive five decades of commitment to education; there have been presentations by local

astronauts, university professors, including Nobel Prize winner, Dr. M. Stanley Whittingham, local engineers, scientists, and more; and

WHEREAS, Dedicated to serving its community, The Kopernik Observatory & Science Center has hosted a number of notable public events ranging from solar and lunar eclipses to comet and meteor shower viewings, as well as family STEM events like its renowned RocketFest; the institution has even provided its summer camp students the opportunity to speak directly to astronauts aboard the International Space Station through its Ham radio station; and

WHEREAS, The Kopernik Observatory & Science Center, commits to making a real difference in the lives of young people by partnering with local school districts to provide hands-on STEM investigations to support and augment curriculum; it also has worked with high school and college students as interns, many of whom have gone on to pursue STEM-related degrees and are now scientists, engineers, and college professors; and

WHEREAS, It is with great pleasure that this Legislative Body acknowledges this exceptional business and its role in improving the quality of life in its community, 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 commemorate the 50th Anniversary of Kopernik Observatory & Science Center of Vestal, New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Kopernik Observatory & Science Center.