

Assembly Resolution No. 1505

BY: M. of A. Palmesano

COMMEMORATING the 175th Anniversary of the inaugural trip of the Erie Railroad through Hornell, New York

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize and commemorate those historic events and institutions which have contributed significantly to the heritage, culture, and economic vitality of the 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 commemorate the 175th Anniversary of the inaugural trip of the Erie Railroad through Hornell, New York, celebrated on Saturday, May 16, 2026, at the Hornell Erie Depot Museum in the City of Hornell; and

WHEREAS, The commemoration included a free public open house hosted by the Hornell Erie Depot Museum, honoring the profound historical significance of the Erie Railroad and its enduring impact on the Southern Tier region and the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, The Erie Railroad was among the first major railroads in the United States, connecting New York City with Dunkirk, New York, and opening new avenues of transportation, commerce, communication, and economic development across New York State; and

WHEREAS, On May 14, 1851, the first passenger train to travel the full length of the Erie Railroad from Piermont-on-Hudson to Dunkirk arrived in Hornellsville carrying President of the United States Millard Fillmore and Secretary of State Daniel Webster, marking a pivotal moment in the history of American transportation and the growth of Hornellsville; and

WHEREAS, Prior to the arrival of the Erie Railroad, the population of Hornellsville stood at approximately 700 residents in 1851; by 1852, the population had surged to 1,841, demonstrating the transformative economic and social influence of rail transportation upon the community; and

WHEREAS, Hornell became a major repair and maintenance center for the Erie Railroad, serving as the junction point for the railroad's two principal branches and providing employment opportunities that fueled generations of prosperity and growth; and

WHEREAS, By 1877, the Erie Railroad employed approximately 800 individuals in Hornell, and by 1940, the City's population had grown to 15,649 residents, illustrating the central role the railroad industry played in shaping the identity and development of the region; and

WHEREAS, In 1948, the Erie Railroad transitioned from steam locomotives to diesel engines, significantly reducing maintenance needs

and leading to widespread layoffs in the Hornell repair shops, signaling the beginning of major economic changes for the community; and

WHEREAS, In 1960, the Erie Railroad merged with the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad to form the Erie Lackawanna Railroad, and subsequent reductions in rail operations and employment further altered the economic landscape of Hornell; and

WHEREAS, Passenger rail service on the Erie Lackawanna Railroad officially ceased on December 31, 1969, with limited holiday service continuing through January 4, 1970; and

WHEREAS, Following the devastating impact of Hurricane Agnes in 1972, damage to rail infrastructure contributed to the bankruptcy of the Erie Lackawanna Railroad, after which rail operations were assumed by Conrail, resulting in additional service reductions, employment losses, and the closure of the Hornell repair shops; and

WHEREAS, Determined to preserve and honor this important legacy, the Hornell Erie Depot Museum was established in 2005 to safeguard the history of the railroad industry and the people whose labor and dedication shaped the Hornell area for generations; and

WHEREAS, The proud railroad heritage of Hornell continues into the modern era through the presence of Alstom, whose operations in the City since the early 2000s have revitalized the historic rail shops and established Hornell as a leading center for railcar manufacturing and refurbishment in North America; and

WHEREAS, Alstom has contributed substantially to economic growth and employment in the region through major transportation projects, including the overhaul of the PATCO Speedline fleet in 2011, the construction of light rail vehicles for OC Transpo in 2013, and the manufacture of Amtrak's first high-speed rail cars produced in the United States beginning in 2016, including second-generation Acela trains beginning production in 2020; and

WHEREAS, Hornell's rich railroad history also includes the operations of numerous additional rail and traction companies, including the Hornellsville Electric Railway Company, the Hornellsville & Canisteo Railway Company, the Hornell Traction Company, the Geneva Southwestern and Hornellsville Railway, the Geneva and Hornellsville Railway, the Geneva, Hornellsville and Pine Creek Railway, and the Rochester, Hornellsville and Lackawanna Railroad, each contributing to the growth and connectivity of the region; and

WHEREAS, The observance of this 175th Anniversary provides an opportunity to reflect upon the enduring contributions of railroad workers, civic leaders, historians, preservationists, and community members whose efforts have preserved Hornell's unique transportation heritage for future generations; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 175th Anniversary of the Erie Railroad's inaugural trip through Hornell, New York, and to honor the enduring legacy of the

railroad industry and its profound impact upon the City of Hornell, the Southern Tier, and the State of New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the Hornell Erie Depot Museum.