



EMERSON PARK
PAVILION

100

years



HISTORY
OF EMERSON
PARK PAVILION

1912-2012

Emerson Park in Auburn, NY, has an incredibly rich history and great significance to generations of families in Central New York. Originally called Lakeside Park more than a century ago, it has featured live bands, carnivals with amusements such as a roller coaster and carousel, trolley car transportation, steamboat rides on the lake, and more over the years.

But today, we recognize, honor, and celebrate the 100 year history of the Pavilion at Emerson Park. >>

Centennial Celebration & Dedication Event
Today, June 10, 2012
See back page for details

It All Started In 1895...



The original lakeside pavilion at Owasco Lake was constructed in 1895. This wooden pavilion hosted big bands and dancing every afternoon and evening during the summer season, until the facility burned to the ground in May 1912. The owner at that time, the Auburn and Syracuse Electric Railroad Company, decided to rebuild on the same site. A new pavilion opened just a few months later in July. It featured new amenities, like the 5,200 square foot dance floor, an orchestra platform, a fully-equipped restaurant, the iconic fountain, and the largest "pleasure park" pavilion veranda in the United States.

Nearly 50% larger than the original pavilion, the new structure was ranked as one of the largest, finest and most completely equipped of its kind in the country. The community was ecstatic, and a crowd of 3,500 attended the official opening.

The music, dancing, and celebrations resumed - actually, a bit sooner than the community planned. The night before the first dance was scheduled to be held at the new pavilion, a group of 20 residents from the Town of Owasco met shortly after midnight and danced by lantern light to the music of a small orchestra, dancing around the remaining ladders and construction material. One of the guests even stepped in still-wet cement outside the dance floor. This was just the first of many dances held at the new pavilion.

In the 1930's, the park and the pavilion were purchased by Fred L. Emerson and renamed *Enna Jettick Park*, after the brand of shoe manufactured by his company.

In 1944, Mr. Emerson donated the park to Cayuga County and to "Cayuga's citizens for outings and leisurely wholesome enjoyment." His desire was to see this scenic location remain as a

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As citizens of Cayuga County we are proud to have had a role in keeping the Pavilion at Emerson Park alive and well. This was a labor of love.

Our sincere thanks to Cayuga County and the Emerson Foundation.

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PAVILION HISTORY
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“friendly and lovely Park...forever,” where generations of area residents could enjoy the breathtaking views, lake access and recreational opportunities offered by this special place.

To honor and thank Mr. Emerson for his donation, the County renamed it Emerson Park.

The historic Pavilion has been and remains the centerpiece of Emerson Park, and has hosted countless events and community celebrations. The big bands, fox trots and jitterbugs were replaced with new music and dances. However, after almost 100 years of use, the Pavilion was in need of significant renovation.

In 2007, the Fred L. Emerson Foundation (established in 1932) offered to assist Cayuga County with a comprehensive restoration of the Pavilion to ensure the facility would be available to create fond memories for generations to come. This public-private partnership was a first for the Foundation, and would result in the Foundation’s largest single initiative to date.

A Pavilion Advisory Committee, made up of county representatives and members of the Emerson Foundation, began to develop a plan in 2009 for preserving the facility’s future. In late 2010, C&S Companies was hired as project manager, and a public input session was held as plans started to take shape for the renovations of the beloved structure.

The vision that the Foundation shared with Cayuga County was to transform the Pavilion from a quaint, seasonal banquet hall to a regional, destination venue that is efficiently and effectively utilized with multiple bookings and events on year-round basis. The goal was to attract more visitors to Cayuga County, which in turn would strengthen local business opportunities for area hotels, restaurants, stores, wineries, B&B’s and the like. The Pavilion would continue to serve as the anchor attraction at Emerson Park, but it would also become a stronger catalyst for the local economy.

It would take two crucial elements to achieve this vision.

The first was funding. The site enhancements and renovations were estimated to cost more than \$4 million. The Fred L. Emerson Foundation agreed to invest upwards of \$3.5 million and the County agreed to contribute the remaining share through in-kind services for the site enhancements.

The second crucial element to achieve the vision was to develop a new business model for the operation of the facility. The partnership set out to identify a facility operator with the experience, ideas, talent and energy necessary



Visitors to Emerson Park would walk from the trolley station “on the boardwalk – (literally)” leading to the Pavilion. At right: the fire in May, 1912, reduced the Pavilion to ashes. However, the new Pavilion reopened in July 1912, just two months after it was destroyed.



to envision, operate and market the Pavilion as a regional attraction. Following a competitive search process, the Cayuga County Legislature selected H&J Hospitality to be the exclusive operator of the Pavilion beginning in 2012. A review committee, made-up of County officials and representatives of the Emerson Foundation, reviewed all proposals and met with each of the prospective operators. After considering all relevant factors, H&J Hospitality was the committee’s unanimous recommendation to the County Legislature.

Turning facility management over to H&J Hospitality will relieve the County of the day-to-day responsibility and cost of booking, as well as overseeing the catering operations of the Pavilion. It will also enable the facility manager

to more broadly market the facility and increase usage through booking multiple events per day. This new operational strategy will result in increased revenue that will be dedicated for the regular and on-going maintenance of the facility.

Ground broke on renovations to the facility on May 2, 2011, and renovations progressed for the next 12 months. The County, the Foundation, and C&S Companies worked diligently with the New York State Office of Historic Preservation to ensure the

scheduled restorations were historically appropriate.

A large addition was built on the west end of the building to house an expanded and more modern main kitchen, while a smaller addition was constructed on the pavilion’s east end for a satellite kitchen. This will enable the pavilion to cater two or more events at the same time – for the first time. The Pavilion also now includes a new space for smaller

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Behind the SCENES

Since 1912, the Emerson Park Pavilion has been a fixture on the shores of Owasco Lake. In the years that have passed the hallowed walls of this auspicious structure have bore witness to countless prom dances, big bands swinging and wedding toasts, but after more than a century this bastion of local history has received an extraordinary makeover thanks to the cooperation between the Fred L. Emerson Foundation and Cayuga County.

Rob Morphy
Special to The Citizen

Dan Fessenden, executive director of the Emerson Foundation, emphasized that the partnership forged between the Emerson

Foundation and the County was essential to the success of this renovation.

"The only way this renovation could happen was if the County and the Emerson Foundation figured out a structure that aligned with the public's interest," said Fessenden. "That sounds straightforward and simple, but it's trickier than it sounds."

An interest that was expressed by both the public and the New York State government was a desire to preserve and respect the historical integrity of the structure. The Emerson Pavilion is on the New York State Register of Historical Sites and Fessenden emphasized that while upgrades to the actual structure were necessary to make this seasonal facility viable as a year round multipurpose event center, one of the primary concerns of both the Emerson Foundation and Cayuga County was to maintain its historic value.

"Respecting the historic elements of that facility while trying to make it more modern is a pretty tricky balance for any building," said Fessenden. "Because the building is 100 years old and listed on the state register of historical sites we had a government agency looking over our shoulder and making sure that the design ideas were done with the appropriate deference to its historical significance. We did everything we could to protect the historical integrity of the building."

In order to achieve this goal the Emerson Foundation and Cayuga County took almost half a decade to plan the renovation before even consulting a

contractor.

"The actual renovation work started a year ago, but in actuality the foundation started talking about this 4 years ago," said Fessenden. "We brainstormed very early on in the process and engaged the public to get feedback from them. Then we met with various design firms. There were a lot of things going on long before there was a contractor on site."

Three architectural design firms were jointly responsible for the Emerson Pavilion's renovations. They include Beardsley Design Associates of Auburn, Syracuse's Crawford & Stearns and C&S Companies of Syracuse. According to Fessenden, Beardsley and Crawford & Stearns developed the preliminary design concepts before turning the project over to C&S Companies for final design and construction management.

VIP Structures of Syracuse was hired as the General Contractor while numerous sub-contractors - many from the Auburn area - were involved in the actual restoration and construction work. In the end, Fessenden asserted that a project as complex and difficult as this one would not have been possible without the cooperation between the Emerson Foundation and Cayuga County.

"This has been a great partnership," said Fessenden. "Our relationship with the county has made some of the stress and strain of a multimillion dollar project that much easier to navigate. Considering the complexities of everything involved, it worked a lot smoother than I could have hoped for!"

Tom Squires, County Administrator for Cayuga County, echoed Dan's

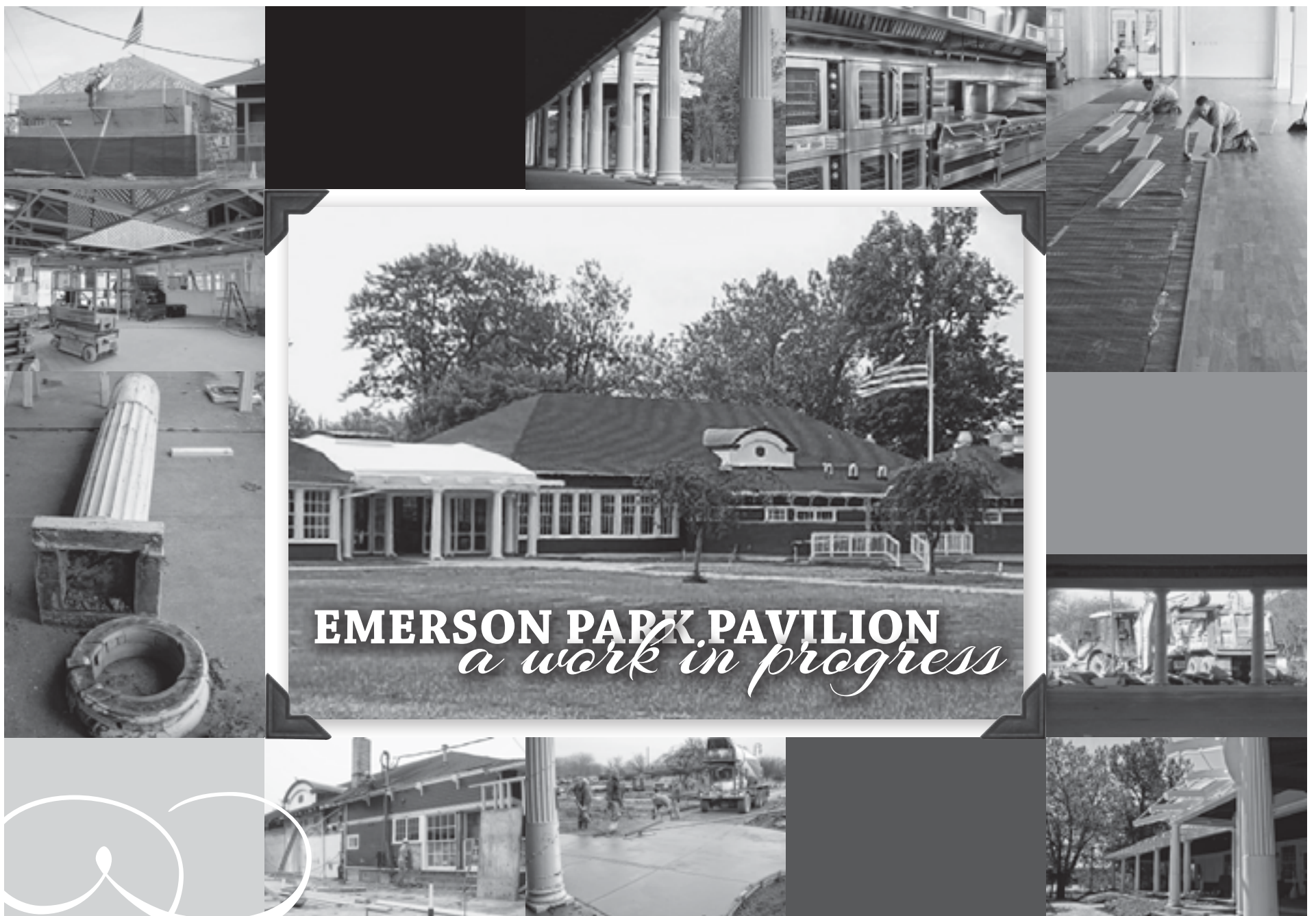


Representatives of the Fred L. Emerson Foundation and Cayuga County celebrate the Emerson Park Pavilion renovation groundbreaking. Pictured from left to right are: Tim Lattimore, Cayuga County Legislator; Sally Wagner, Director, Emerson Foundation; Peter Emerson, Director, Emerson Foundation; Gary Emerson, Director, Emerson Foundation; Tony Franceschelli, President, Emerson Foundation; Peter Tortorici, (former) Chair, Cayuga County Legislator; Patrick Mahunik, Cayuga County Legislator; Cindy Aikman, Cayuga County Legislator; Roger Mills, (former) Cayuga County Legislator; Tom Squires, Cayuga County Administrator



comments: "This was a very complex project but it succeeded as a result of cooperation and a passionate attention to detail by everyone who was involved. I couldn't be prouder of the effort put forth by the County Highway Department, as well as the Soil & Water Conservation District and the Water & Sewer Authority. They saw the value

of this wonderful new facility to the entire community and they responded with dedication and hard work. The Pavilion now stands as a testament to the sincere generosity of one of Auburn's leading families and the renewed spirit of cooperation and vision that will make Auburn stand out among communities throughout central New York."



EMERSON PARK PAVILION
a work in progress



The main kitchen in the newly renovated pavilion

H&J Hospitality Is Ready to Serve



leader in the industry, H & J Hospitality, Inc., is bringing its team of dedicated and detail-oriented professionals

to the Pavilion at Emerson Park from its home base in Ithaca. Awarded the contract for exclusive catering rights to this newly renovated facility, H & J Hospitality owner Jaime Ciaschi commented that his team is ready and eager to start work: "Every one on our team was absolutely thrilled to have won the contract to provide catering services at the Pavilion. Our proven success and years of experience as the preferred caterer for the Johnson Graduate School of Management at Cornell University and the Ithaca Yacht Club have prepared us for this wonderful challenge. We are absolutely ready to start providing our customers with truly memorable, enjoyable experiences at this spectacular venue."

The renovated and enhanced Pavilion has been transformed into a year-round facility with three private dining areas

and a new kitchen. Adrienne Zornow, Sales and Marketing Manager for H & J Hospitality, commented that "the Pavilion will soon prove to be one of the most popular destinations in this area for weddings, receptions, themed events and special business functions. The setting, the history and the size of the Pavilion will certainly attract customers from throughout Central New York. Our catering service, terrific staff and attention to detail will reinforce that reputation."

While the Pavilion has graced the shores of Owasco Lake for 100 years, H & J Hospitality is the owner and operator of one of Ithaca's oldest restaurants - Joe's Restaurant. Located at 602 West Buffalo Street, has been operating since the early 1930's. Over the years Joe's has grown and evolved into a very popular gathering place for locals, students and travelers alike.

Ciaschi concluded by saying that "our experience with Joe's Restaurant and at Cornell University and the Ithaca Yacht Club have taught us that a successful catering business and restaurant are built on great food and even better customer service. We promise to over deliver on both for our clients at the Emerson Park Pavilion."

PAVILION HISTORY continued from page E3



An aerial photograph of the Pavilion (1912-1913)

gatherings with a private deck for outdoor seating and magnificent views to the south and west.

Inside: new wood floors, heating and air-conditioning, new plumbing and electrical systems, state-of-the-art sound system, WiFi, new restrooms, and insulation were installed. A retractable glass enclosure was also added to the breezeway that separates the ballroom and dining room. Now, not only will the Pavilion be heated and open year-round, but it will also be air conditioned making summertime gatherings on the shores of Owasco Lake even more enjoyable. Additionally, the lattice ceiling in the ballroom was removed to expose the grandeur of the overhead space, just as it was 100 years ago.

Outside: the Cayuga County Highway Department, the Cayuga County Water & Sewer Authority and the Cayuga County Soil & Water Conservation District teamed up to install new electric, water, sewer, gas service lines and storm drains. A drop-off driveway, heated sidewalks, and more outdoor lights were added, all to provide easier access to the building year-round. The asphalt-shingled roof was replaced and the historic columns were masterfully restored by Auburn's own Bartolotta Furniture company.

In the midst of the transformation, an Event Expo was held in July 2011 to offer a chance for local businesses to explore partnership

opportunities with the Pavilion and offer community residents a glimpse of the new opportunities and Pavilion partners that will be available for reunions, receptions, corporate events, celebrations and more at the renovated facility. The event featured vendor booths, fashion shows, demonstrations,



The Pavilion has always been a special place for family and friends to gather every summer. That tradition will continue, even better than before.

appetizers, beer and wine tastings, live music, and various set up and layout options to showcase the coordination and design talents of the Pavilion and its partners for a variety of events.

The Emerson Park Pavilion is now 100-years-old. The facility has hosted countless events, dances and celebrations that have created lasting memories for generations of area residents. The Pavilion now stands ready to host the celebrations of a new generation and a new century.

The Pavilion at Emerson Park

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PLEASE JOIN US FOR A CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION & DEDICATION EVENT!

After 12 months, the transformation is complete. Today, the Emerson Park Pavilion is 100-years-old, and now stands ready to host the celebrations of a new generation and a new century. So, please join us as we...

RECOGNIZE, HONOR & CELEBRATE.



THE NEW EMERSON PARK PAVILION

~ **Sunday, June 10th 2012** ~

2:30 - 3:00 pm - Dedication Ceremony

3:00 - 5:00 pm - Community Open House

Family friendly tours and complementary refreshments will be available.

For more information about the renovation project, visit...

www.EmersonParkPavilionProject.com

Project Management and Design Partners:

Beardsley Design Associates, C&S Design Build, Inc., Crawford & Stearns



The Emerson Park Pavilion Project is a public-private partnership between Cayuga County and the Fred L. Emerson Foundation dedicated to rejuvenation and enhancement of the Emerson Park Pavilion to better serve the public and become a regional destination that fuels the local economy with new business and tourism.