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REPAIRED, REDEDICATED BRIDGE REOPENED WITH JUBILATION

WILBRAHAM—When the Green-Towne Bridge, named after two prominent residents of Wilbraham and Ludlow, was dedicated on August 13, 1939, several thousand residents of Wilbraham, Ludlow and surrounding communities gathered with local and state officials to celebrate what then Congressman Charles R. Clason deemed “one of the finest bridges in Western Massachusetts.” Commonly referred to as the “Cottage Avenue Bridge,” it spans the Chicopee River, connecting the communities of Wilbraham and Ludlow. The first dedication began with one of the largest parades ever held in the communities, and was attended by a representative from the office of Governor Leverett Saltonstall and dozens of other prominent citizens.

Some six decades later, an inspection of the Cottage Avenue Bridge revealed that like so many bridges built in the early 1900’s, it was showing signs of deterioration. On a scale of zero to nine, the bridge was given a score of four, and was shut down to pedestrian traffic and non-emergency vehicles weighing over five tons. Local officials went to work securing funding for the bridge’s repair.

“The Cottage Avenue Bridge is of particular importance to this area, not simply because of its historical value, but because it serves as a primary connector between the two Towns of Wilbraham and Ludlow,” said State Representative Gale D. Candaras (D-Wilbraham), who was instrumental in helping to secure \$6.5 million in state funding to repair the bridge.

Construction began in July of 2005, thus posing a challenge to those who wished to travel between the two towns. “Many, many people have been forced to seek alternate routes as a result of this construction, often traveling many

miles out of the way, and I am delighted that their patience was rewarded on November 15,” said Candaras.

On October 23, Candaras, along with State Senator Brian P. Lees (R-East Longmeadow); an aide from the office of State Representative Thomas M. Petrolati (D- Ludlow); David Barry and Larry Nascimento, chairmen of the Wilbraham and Ludlow Boards of Selectmen, respectively; town engineers from both communities, and representatives from the Massachusetts Highway Department and Warner Bros. general contractors, met in Candaras' office to discuss a time-line for completion of the project. It was decided that a November 15 deadline would yield enough time to finish repairs.

The re-dedication ceremony was held November 15, featuring ribbon-cutting, musical performances by the Minnechaug Regional and Ludlow High School marching bands and refreshments complements of Dunkin' Donuts. Friendly Ice Cream served ice cream and distributed coupons for 39-cent ice cream cones, in honor of the year 1939, when the Bridge was last dedicated. East Longmeadow Selectman Jim Driscoll of O'Driscoll's in Wilbraham provided hot dogs and hamburgers. Additionally, a 1939 Zephyr and 2006 Corvette were on hand to represent the years that the Bridge was built and subsequently reconstructed.

Rep. Candaras presented Resolutions from the State House of Representatives and Senate to the Towns of Wilbraham and Ludlow and a House Citation to Linda Bartlett, the granddaughter of Fred Green, one of the men after whom the Bridge was named, and who served as a Wilbraham selectman for 34 years prior to his death in 1938. Many other officials were also in attendance including State Senator Brian Lees, Wilbraham Selectman David Barry, and Ludlow Selectman Lawrence Nascimento.