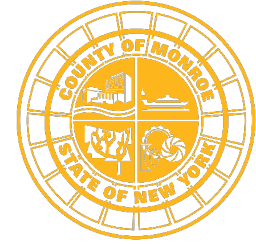




News from the Office of
Adam J. Bello
Monroe County Executive



For Immediate Release
January 5, 2022

Monroe County Executive Adam Bello Launches Monroe County Bicentennial Celebration

Yearlong Celebration of County Bicentennial Encourages Community to Come Together and “Celebrate More”

(Rochester, New York) – Monroe County Executive Adam Bello today launched Monroe County’s Bicentennial celebration, alongside community partners and leaders at the Strong Museum of Play.

Celebrate More is a community-wide celebration of events tied to the Monroe County Bicentennial. **Celebrate More** will bring people from across the community together in celebration of all that Monroe County has to offer, from historic, cultural, and educational festivals to family-friendly activities and special events.

“Monroe County’s bicentennial showcases the rich history of our region and it comes at a time when we all want to safely gather again,” said County Executive Bello, “We are on the path to recovery, bringing Monroe back and planning forward to make a healthier, safer, more equitable and more exciting Monroe County as we start our next 200 years. Let’s engage in our celebrations, but do so smartly: remember to vax, boost, and mask, so we can all **Celebrate More** together.”

The celebration of the Monroe County Bicentennial recognizes the proud history and the promising future of Monroe County. This celebration includes the return of existing events, several of which have not taken place since 2019, alongside exciting new events and activities, including festivals, concerts, parades, and educational programming. Monroe County is partnering with libraries and historians in its towns, villages and the City of Rochester to educate and bring to life the history of our region.

“The City of Rochester is the heartbeat of Monroe County and we are happy to join the County Bicentennial and **Celebrate More**,” said Rochester Mayor Malik Evans. “As the County Executive and I believe, you cannot tell the story of the history of Monroe County without the city, and you cannot build the future of Monroe County without the city. Let’s **Celebrate More** of our neighborhoods, cultural diversity, festivals, arts, and local attractions during this historic bicentennial year.”

Celebrate More recognizes and commemorates other milestone anniversaries and events for community groups large and small – everything from Garth Fagan Dance, the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, Eastman School of Music, Geva Theatre Center, the Charlotte-Genesee Lighthouse and more.

Community groups including neighborhood associations, faith organizations and local businesses are encouraged to participate by including and promoting their events on the **Celebrate More** website at CelebrateMore200.com.

Celebrate More is participating with existing community events and festivals, including the Rochester Lilac Festival, the Rochester International Jazz Festival, along with new events and activities created for the Bicentennial. Details on new events will follow.

The first event to kick off celebrations is [Winterfest at Mendon Ponds Park](#). Winterfest is a free, fun-filled, action-packed day of outdoor activities, presented by County Executive Adam Bello and the Monroe County Department of Parks. Winterfest takes place on Sunday, January 9, 2022, from 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. Winterfest activities include arts & crafts, kids activities, demonstrations by the Monroe County Sheriff's Office and Monroe County Forestry, Wild Wings Inc., Seneca Park Zoo, hayrides, sledding (weather dependent), a Mercy Flight helicopter landing and much more.

Community and government partners are invited to join in on the bicentennial celebration. Visit Rochester, the official tourism promotion agency for Monroe County, is the bicentennial promotional partner to publicize **Celebrate More** events to both local residents and visitors. Jay Advertising, a Rochester-based full-service agency, developed the **Celebrate More** creative theme and will assist in producing new events for the bicentennial celebration.

“The Monroe County Bicentennial is a great reason to visit Rochester and **Celebrate More** – more festivals, more events, and more visitors to Monroe County,” said Don Jeffries, president & CEO, of Visit Rochester. “Visit Rochester is excited to partner with Monroe County to promote the many **Celebrate More** events and activities. The bicentennial and **Celebrate More** are an excellent opportunity to highlight the best of our community to residents and visitors alike.”

Local businesses can play a key role with **Celebrate More**, including sharing events and promotions with a Monroe County or bicentennial theme, or by supporting and sponsoring events. Businesses are encouraged to visit CelebrateMore200.com to submit events, sponsorship or collaboration inquires.

“Local businesses have played an important role in the history of Monroe County for the past 200 years, putting us on the cutting edge of technology and innovation,” said Bob Duffy, President and CEO, of the Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce. “That progress continues today with the resilient businesses that are driving our economy and powering us into the future. We look forward to joining with County Executive Adam Bello and all of our community leaders in celebrating more of what makes Rochester and Monroe County, New York a great place to grow a business and thrive.”

The observation of Monroe County's bicentennial officially began in 2021, but due to COVID-19, we needed to postpone broad scale public and community celebrations until 2022. Previous bicentennial events included a Monroe County night at the Rochester Red Wings, a Monroe County-themed weekend and Agricultural Fair at Genesee Country Village and Museum, the Rochester Summer Soul Festival, 2021 KeyBank Rochester Fringe Festival, and the planting of a bicentennial tree.

Bicentennial Co-Chairs include Faheem Masood, president and chief executive officer of ESL Federal Credit Union; Carolyn Vacca, Monroe County historian and professor and chair of the History Department at St. John Fisher College; Rev. Derrill Blue, senior pastor of the African

Memorial Episcopal Zion Church on Clarissa Street; and Shannon Ealy, co-chair of the RocCity Coalition.

“Monroe County’s bicentennial is the opportune moment for us to come together and celebrate all that our community has to offer,” said Faheem Masood, president and CEO, of ESL Federal Credit Union. “While the pandemic has and continues to impact all of our lives, we will press onward into the new year with hope and optimism. Let Monroe County’s bicentennial be our community’s time to celebrate amongst our families, friends and neighbors. Let us honor and celebrate all of the wonderful people, organizations and events that make our community such a wonderful place to call home.”

“The history of Monroe County provides a most magnificent drama, most fitting for the theme, Celebrate More. I am honored to be able to serve as one of the Co-Chairs working to make this a year of remembrance and vision,” said Carolyn Vacca, Monroe County historian. “Throughout the year, the town and village historians will be holding events, sharing their vast knowledge of our municipalities, and contributing to our understanding of how we came to be who we are today. Looking back to the original residents, the Native Americans, we will acknowledge all the diverse groups who built our community and faced challenges we can only imagine. We will be working to develop inclusive curriculum materials for schools and libraries so that all students can see their role as citizens of our community.”

“As a Co-chair of the 200th Anniversary of Monroe County, I am enthusiastic about what’s on the horizon in 2022 as we actuate our theme Celebrate More,” said Rev. Derrill Blue, senior pastor of the African Memorial Episcopal Zion Church. “Since 1817, the Faith Community has been an integral partner with various entities and organizations throughout Monroe County. We continue this legacy by committing our efforts and resources to faith formation, community cultivation, and social solidarity. With this eagerness, I invite all Faith Communities to this collaborative effort as we honor the rich history and promising future of Monroe County.”

“The talent and energy of young Rochesterians will fuel Monroe County’s next 200 years, just as they have shaped its storied past,” said Shannon Ealy, co-chair, RocCity Coalition. “We are excited to bring young people together for education and events that highlight everything we have been through, and all that we will accomplish together.”

Celebrate More news, events and updates will be regularly added to the bicentennial website at CelebrateMore200.com, as well as Monroe County and Visit Rochester’s social media platforms.

— 30 —

Media inquiries:

Gary Walker, Director of Communications

Garywalker@MonroeCounty.gov

(585) 753-1064

Meaghan McDermott, Deputy Director of Communications

MeaghanMcDermott@monroecounty.gov

(585) 469-4365