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Press Release

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[Bridges & Tunnels](#)

IMMEDIATE

Triborough Bridge Renamed Robert F. Kennedy Bridge

MTA Bridges and Tunnels marked the official re-christening on Wednesday of its Triborough Bridge, which is now the Robert F. Kennedy Bridge. The ceremony, attended by former President Bill Clinton, MTA leadership, New York State and City officials and Kennedy family members, took place on a cold sunny morning in Astoria Park in the shadow of the bridge's Queens suspended span. Legislation renaming the bridge was signed into law by Governor David Paterson on August 8, 2008.

"This is a fitting honor for a truly great New Yorker," said Elliot G. Sander, Executive Director and CEO of the MTA. "Connecting Harlem, the South Bronx, and Astoria, the Robert F. Kennedy Bridge is MTA Bridges and Tunnels' flagship facility. With 64 million vehicle crossings per year, it is a critical link in the region's transportation infrastructure."

Sander was joined by Clinton, Governor Paterson, Mayor Michael Bloomberg and other dignitaries who stood with Ethel Kennedy, Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., Kerry Kennedy and other family members as the first Robert F. Kennedy Bridge sign was unveiled to the assembled crowd. Following the program, a motorcade of vintage cars carrying Kennedy family members and officials, including MTA Chairman H. Dale Hemmerdinger and MTA Bridges and Tunnels Acting President David Moretti, proceeded across all three spans of the bridge, ending at P.S. M169/Robert F. Kennedy School in Manhattan.

"We take pride in this historic occasion, and our goal is to make the name transition for this extraordinary bridge as smooth as possible for our customers," explained Moretti. He said bridge staff completed sign changes in the agency's sign shop and RFK banners were also installed. Appropriate reference sources in print and online have also been contacted and instructed to implement the name change effective immediately.

To mark the occasion, a 40-foot x 60-foot banner was hung from the bridge's Queens tower was adorned with, and a series of smaller "RFK Bridge" banners greeted motorists along various stretches of the bridge's three spans.

The bridge, which opened on July 11, 1936, was a significant public works project during the Great Depression. One thousand men worked at the construction site on a typical day, a number that more than doubled as the bridge neared completion. Across the country, thousands more worked in steel mills, fabricating shops, lumber mills and concrete plants that were economically revitalized by the project.

The bridge's 3.5 miles of roadway include a suspension span to Queens, a vertical lift bridge to Harlem in Manhattan and a fixed truss bridge to the Bronx—all converging at a huge traffic junction on Randall's Island. The Queens span is 1,380-feet long and has four lanes in either direction. It has a clearance of 135 feet above the river, high enough for ships to pass under. The Harlem River lift span (as it is commonly called) in Manhattan has three lanes in either direction and moves its center section up and down like an elevator to allow tall marine traffic to pass. The Bronx crossing has three lanes in either direction over its framework of steel beams that form interconnected triangles, making the structure light and strong.

The RFK Bridge is currently undergoing a multi-year \$1 billion rehabilitation that includes the strengthening of the superstructure and replacement of its entire roadway deck and the addition of a new ramp from the viaduct to the island below it. Already completed parts of this rehabilitation include the replacement of all the suspender ropes on the suspension span and the replacement of the roadway decks on the suspension and lift spans. Future projects include the replacement of the toll plazas and the rehabilitation of the ramps to and from Manhattan.

The three spans of the Robert F. Kennedy Bridge carry more than 164,000 vehicles daily to Manhattan, Queens and the Bronx.

MTA Bridges and Tunnels' facilities are the Robert F. Kennedy, Throgs Neck, Bronx-Whitestone, Henry Hudson, Verrazano-Narrows, Cross Bay Veterans Memorial and Marine Parkway-Gil Hodges Bridges, and the Queens Midtown and Brooklyn-Battery Tunnels. The agency is the largest toll authority in the nation, helping more than 850,000 vehicles and more than a million people reach their destination each day.





Photo caption: #1: Elliot Sander addresses crowd at Robert F. Kennedy Bridge naming ceremony in Astoria Park.

Photo caption: #2: New sign is unveiled by Ethel Kennedy (left), with help from Governor Paterson and President Clinton.



Photo caption: #3: Motorcade proceeds with RFK banners in background.