



Mayor James Richetelli Jr., DEP Commissioner Daniel Esty, James Amann and Winthrop Smith take the lead in cutting a ceremonial ribbon at the new boardwalk Monday. (Photo by Jill Dion)

# Boardwalk officially opens

By Jill K. Dion  
Editor

City and state officials cut a ceremonial ribbon Monday morning on a boardwalk project that was a long time in the making. The scenic walkway stretches from an existing boardwalk at Silver Sands State Park to Walnut Beach.

"Years ago we had a little dream that we could bring the east and the west together," said Former Speaker of the House James Amann, who started working on beach improve-

ments in the 1980s, when there was still a landfill in the area.

Over the years, many people came together to see the beach and its boardwalk develop. Former Alderman Joe Garbus was one, spending many hours pushing his state representatives for funding. State Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) park specialist Rob Clapper was another, as was former State Rep. Barbara Lambert. They all attended the ribbon cutting Monday.

"This is exciting. I never thought

I'd see the day," said Linda Moretz, who lives near the beach.

She commented on the number of people she has seen walking and running on the new boardwalk, getting exercise and improving their health. "You can't put a price on it," she said.

Harriette Racz, who also lives in Milford, said she opposed the boardwalk extension because she didn't think the state should spend the money on it.

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## BOARDWALK: Ribbon cutting

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The contractor for the project was LaRosa Building Group LLC of Meriden, and the engineer was BSC Group of Glastonbury. The project was administered by the state Department of Public Works.

"This is going to be the biggest hit on this section of the shoreline," said lifelong resident Ralph Harrison. "I hope it brings economic benefits."

James Winkelman, who lives in Laurel Beach, said Garbus deserves a lot of credit for ensuring the project did not fade away.

"We're all just tickled," Winkelman said. "We all come down here every day. It's a great thrill."

Garbus said he is "so overwhelmed" the project is completed.

"The vision is coming through. The federal, state, city and grass-roots community were all instrumental in pushing for all of this," Garbus said. "I'm very happy to bring back the Walnut Beach community that came back from hard times. It finally happened."

# Boardwalk opens with much fanfare

**By Brian McCready**  
Special to the Bulletin

MILFORD - Talk of a boardwalk connecting Walnut Beach and Silver Sands State Park first surfaced in 2003.

After eight years of starts and stops, the \$2.4 million boardwalk is complete. More than 100 residents and officials gathered at Walnut Beach for a ribbon-cutting ceremony Monday morning.

Two driving forces behind the project, Walnut Beach Association President Joseph Garbus, and former state House Speaker James A. Amann, D-Milford, said they could not believe the project was finished.

State Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Daniel C. Esty, during his remarks, quipped that Amann said he's been pushing for the project since he was 28 years old.

"Jim Amann's not 29 anymore," Esty said, while adding this project is a "long time coming."

State and federal funds for the project were first approved in 2006, and construction almost started in 2008, but nests of piping plovers, a species of bird protected by state and federal regulations, were found in its proposed path. The project had to be redesigned, and when the country fell into a recession there was talk the money may be rescinded, but local pressure prevented that from happening.

The boardwalk is a total of three-quarters of a mile, which is one of the longest, continuous boardwalks in the state. The new walkway is two-thirds of a mile and connects to the existing Silver Sands boardwalk, which is 600 feet.

Esty said the boardwalk is handicapped-accessible and is made of high-tech composite materials, which will last a long time. There is also fencing in some areas, which is designed to protect the piping plovers.

Mayor James L. Richetelli Jr. said numerous residents have called to say how much they enjoy the new boardwalk. Richetelli praised Amann, former state Sen. Winthrop S. Smith Jr., R-Milford, former state Rep. Barbara Lambert, D-Milford, and Garbus for ensuring the project became reality.

The mayor said the boardwalk will be good for Walnut Beach's economy.

"We have a vibrant Walnut Beach artist colony," Richetelli said. "People can come down and visit the arts gallery. grab an

## News



The Silver Sands/Walnut Beach boardwalk was officially opened on Monday. The boardwalk, already in use by joggers and pedestrians, stretches for two-thirds of a mile.

B.K. ANGELETTI/  
STAFF  
PHOTOGRAPHER

## SILVER SANDS TO WALNUT BEACH

# Milford boardwalk officially opens

By Frank Juliano  
Staff Writer

MILFORD — The sun wasn't out, but beaming state and city officials provided a glow of their own at the formal dedication Monday of the nearly mile-long boardwalk linking Silver Sands State Park to Walnut Beach.

Among the more than 50 people gathered for the ceremony were former legislators James A. Amann and Winthrop S. Smith, who lined up the state grants that paid for upgrades to Silver Sands and the original 800 feet of boardwalk at that park. The section dedicated Monday stretches across Myrtle Beach, straddling sand dunes and other delicate habitats with stairs down to the sand.

When officials arrived,



Mayor James L. Richetelli Jr. speaks at the Silver Sands/Walnut Beach boardwalk dedication Monday.

including the commissioners of the state Department of Environmental Protection and Department of Public Works, they had to wait for several joggers to pass before setting up the podium. During the ceremony, others walked or ran along the board-

walk, which was completed more than a month ago, oblivious to the speeches and applause.

The \$1.5 million boardwalk with its recycled plastic decking was built by DeRosa Construction of Meriden. Work was stopped and the project re-

designed so that it skirted the edge of a bird habitat.

A boardwalk linking the city and state beaches was first envisioned during the urban renewal program of the late 1960s and early 1970s, said Edward Mead, who represents the neighborhood on the Planning and Zoning Board. The structure replaces a section of Monroe Street, which was torn out to create the state park.

"This is also an economic development project," said Mayor James L. Richetelli Jr. "By linking the two beaches it allows visitors to Silver Sands to walk down and have an ice cream and enjoy the shops and all the art."

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The new boardwalk runs from Silver Sands State Park to Walnut Beach, offering people a chance to stretch their legs and view the water. (Photo by Ralph Petitti)

## Official boardwalk unveiling scheduled for Monday

City and state officials will get together next Monday for a ribbon cutting ceremony to officially open the new boardwalk at Walnut and Silver Sands beaches.

Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Daniel C. Esty, Department of Public Works Acting Commissioner Jonathan Holmes, and Milford Mayor James L. Richetelli Jr. will cut the ribbon for the new boardwalk connecting Silver Sands State Park and

The ribbon-cutting will take place at 11 a.m. on the boardwalk just left of the parking lot at Walnut Beach. It will be followed by a guided tour along the boardwalk.

The new walkway stretches about three quarters of a mile from Silver Sands State Park to Walnut Beach next door. It twists in some areas, around sand dunes and piping plover nesting sites, as it winds its way from the state beach to the city beach.

Residents walking along

weeks have commented on its appeal.

"It's nice," said Horacio Bula, of Bridgeport, several weeks ago as he walked past boardwalk benches and ramps that led from the walkway to the sand. "I normally come here to walk when I have the time."

The pre-existing boardwalk at Silver Sands State Park was 600 linear feet. The addition adds another 2,400 feet on the state beach side and 1,000 feet on the city-owned Walnut

The city portion will be conveyed to the City of Milford, and the state portion will be turned over to the DEP.

The project, funded by \$2 million in state bonds and \$1 million in federal land and wetland conservation dollars, faced some obstacles over the past few years.

Piping plovers have been nesting in the Silver Sands and Myrtle Beach area about five years. When state officials discovered the birds along the boardwalk route, they had to

the nesting sites. The redesign added almost a year to the project and moved the boardwalk addition toward the parking lot at Walnut Beach and into the phragmites at the Silver Sands end.

State budget woes almost stalled the project, too, but city leaders, including Mayor Richetelli and former state Rep. Barbara Lambert, rallied and convinced former Gov. M. Jodi Rell to get the DEP and DPW moving on the project.

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Here, starting at the top, work progressed at Walnut Beach this past year as a boardwalk was extended from Silver Sands to its neighboring beach. Then there was the political scene. Democrat Kim Rose watches election results come in at top right, and above, State Sen. Gayle Slossberg gets a congratulatory kiss from her husband, David, on Election Day. Below, snow covers Anchor Beach during one of 2010's earlier snowstorms.

# Officials discuss name for new boardwalk

By Jill K. Dion  
*Editor*

Some people think the boardwalk at Walnut Beach should be named for the late Walter Farley, a former alderman and community activist. Others believe it should be named for Joseph Garbus, another former alderman who was instrumental in bringing about many improvements to the Walnut Beach area and is still working to do so.

The Park, Beach and Recreation Commission, which has received e-mails and messages from people

supporting one name or the other, was scheduled to talk about the boardwalk name at its meeting last night.

Commission Chairman Dan Worroll, however, said before the meeting that the matter would probably be tabled and discussed at a later date.

"There's no rush for it," said Worroll, who actually leans toward a name like Walnut Beach Memorial Boardwalk to recognize all the people who lost their homes when eminent domain took that area for a state park.

Worroll doesn't expect the boardwalk will be complete

for at least several months. Completion still hinges on piping plovers, tiny birds that nest in the sand there and that have delayed the project for a couple of months already.

"It's still on hold because of the plovers," Worroll said.

Construction workers have to wait for the plovers to leave the area before they can resume building the boardwalk.

"So there's no rush," Worroll said. "It's not like it's going to be done tomorrow. I just think if we name it for one person or another, a lot of people will be slighted."

He mentioned Doris

Gagnon, the woman who refused to leave the area when eminent domain forced people to leave their homes. Gagnon moved back to Silver Sands in a camper after her house was demolished and lived there for years before she died.

Since there is more than one deserving person, it might be best not to name the walkway after anyone, Worroll said. He added that the city can name only the Walnut Beach portion of the boardwalk anyway, since the rest, which runs through Silver Sands State Park, is state-owned.