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Revere Beach celebrates its 120-year anniversary



The country's first public beach, Revere Beach was originally opened by the Metropolitan Park Commission in July 1896.

Tuesday marks the 120th birthday of Revere Beach, the country's first public beach, according to the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation.

The sandy strand has always been an essential part of the city, according to Revere Mayor Brian Arrigo.

"Revere Beach remains the heart of our city, and to me is the crown jewel of the Greater Boston area," Arrigo said in an e-mail. "There's no place else in metro Boston where you can get off an MBTA subway stop just 20 minutes from downtown Boston and enjoy a beautiful stretch of beach, flanked by great restaurants."

Revere Beach was originally opened by the Metropolitan Park Commission in July 1896,

the mayor said. In the years following its opening, the beach's pier brought visitors to a dance hall, café, and ice skating rink.

Soon after, amusement park attractions began to appear along the beach, making it a Massachusetts version of Coney Island. Arrigo said the 1920s featured the opening of the Cyclone roller coaster, which was one of the largest roller coasters in the country.

In 1906, Wonderland Amusement Park opened its doors. Arrigo said the park is believed to have been a possible inspiration for Disneyland.

However, the amusement park era did not last forever at the beach. In 1969, the Cyclone closed after being severely damaged in a fire. Arrigo

said that the Blizzard of 1978 damaged what was left of the parks and essentially marked an end to the beach as an amusement destination.

The beach fell into a state of disrepair, the mayor said, but later underwent a major revitalization project by both the City of Revere and the state.

"Over the past 15 years, great strides have been made in improving the water quality at the Beach, to the point where Revere Beach now has some of the cleanest water of any beach in America, according to Save the Harbor/Save the Bay," Arrigo said.

Arrigo said his administration's goal is to "activate Revere Beach and use it as a catalyst to build an economy for the city of Revere."

"Given the proximity to the T and to the ocean, the potential to attract small businesses, restaurants, shops, cafes, and offices is huge," he said.

Arrigo said that from July 22 to July 24, the beach will host the annual Revere Beach International Sand Sculpting Festival, which will end with a Celebrate Revere Day to honor the history of the city and the beach.

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