

# 1 World Trade Center's Observatory Elevators Feature A Time-Lapse View Of NYC, Including The Event That Altered Its Skyline



**By Clarissa Jan-Lim**

Casting a shadow over New York City's well-trimmed financial district is the new 1 World Trade Center that aims to serve as a testament to the city's enduring spirit. By next month, those who visit the observatory atop the towering skyscraper will get to witness, in the World Trade Center's elevators, a time-lapse panorama of NYC throughout centuries of development.

The 47 second elevator ride to the 102nd floor observatory will show an almost 3-dimensional-esque view of lower Manhattan's skyline, beginning from the island's 16th century bogs to present day. As described by *The New York Times*, the time-lapse will be "as if one were witnessing 515 years of history unfolding at the tip of Manhattan Island."



Strikingly, it also includes the old World Trade Center for a few seconds before it disappears when the year passes 2001. David W. Checketts, chairman and chief executive of Legends Hospitality, which operates the three-floor observatory, told the newspaper that there would have been no way around 9/11, despite the debate within the company and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey about its inclusion.

The event is certainly a key part of history. We did not think you could ignore it. Having it appear in the year it did and disappear in the year it did was the respectful way of addressing the fact that it was part of the landscape. ... There were strong opinions and emotional reactions all around.

Some who have closely scrutinized the video suggested that there could be discrepancies in a couple of buildings' opening in the skyline's architecture as it reaches the 20th century. As it reaches 2010, the video features construction beams of the new World Trade Center, as if the elevator were being encased in it.

The observatory is 1,268 feet above ground, making it the third highest in the country, after Chicago's Willis Tower — formerly known as Sears — at 1,354 feet. David Kerschner, Legends Hospitality's president of attractions, told *The New York Times* that the elevators, five in total, travel at 2,000 feet per minute, or 23 miles per hour.



Set to open in May, the observatory has been plagued by controversies. *The New York Post* criticized its \$32 adult entry fee, despite that cost being about similar to other NYC observation decks. The tabloid noted that the problem lay within the restaurants being located inside the observatory, thereby imposing an entrance fee for diners — unreasonable even by NYC standards.

More gravely, Manhattan prosecutors are currently investigating the connection between Legends Hospitality and Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. Legends is partially-owned by Dallas Cowboys owner Jerry Jones, whose close relationship with Gov. Chris Christie of New Jersey — who partially controls both Port Authorities — has come under scrutiny.

