

Four World Trade Center Open For Business 12 Years After Terror Attacks

By Jennifer Fermino



The gleaming new 72-story skyscraper is the first building to open on the site since the destruction of the Twin Towers on Sept. 11, 2001.

“This is a major turning point for the World Trade Center, and really for our entire city,” said Mayor Bloomberg.

He was one of a host of political and business leaders who attended a outdoor ceremony to commemorate the historic opening.

It was so cold that the speakers and civic leaders in the VIP section were given blankets to keep warm during the speeches, but even the frigid temps couldn’t dampen the spirit of enthusiasm at the site of the tragedy.

Larry Silverstein, the WTC developer, called it a “moment of enormous pride.”

“Our duty is to create a memorial to those friends, neighbors, and co-workers lost on 9/11, but we’re also charged with creating a vibrant neighborhood, a better version of New York,” he said.

To that end, the building was created to be both an office tower and a retail hub, which will include street level and underground stores intended to liven up the neighborhood.

The building’s design also opens up a stretch of Greenwich Street that has been closed since construction began on the original World Trade Center half a century ago.

Silverstein thanked nearly everyone connected to the massive project, from Gov. Cuomo - who did not attend - down to the more than 1,200 union construction workers who collectively spent 3.2 million hours on the site.

“This is truly a project by and for New Yorkers,” he said.

Adding to the emotion of the day, two Silverstein Properties employees deeply involved in the building’s construction lost loved ones on 9/11, including communications manager Jessica Schoenholtz-Murphy.

“I love this city, so when you’re trying to bring it back, that’s rewarding to be part of,” said Schoenholtz-Murphy, whose brother Alex Steinman was a trader at Cantor Fitzgerald.

Silverstein Properties project manager Scott Thompson also lost his older brother Glenn in the attacks.

About a quarter of the space is leased to the Port Authority, which will use it as its new headquarters. The city is also renting a large chunk of the building for office space. Roughly half of the building is still vacant.

The grand opening comes a day after the Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat declared that its neighbor, One World Trade Center, will be the tallest skyscraper in the country when complete.

One World Trade Center, which is expected to open in 2014, beat out the Willis Tower in Chicago for the title.

“We didn’t have to be told that New York was number one, but it’s always nice to hear,” said Janno Lieber, president of World Trade Center Properties.