

# GROUNDBREAKING AT THE NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR 1964-1965

SEPTEMBER 26, 1962

ELECTRIC  
POWER & LIGHT  
EXHIBIT



*Robert Moses, Fair president, and Ernest R. Acker, president of Electric Power & Light, Inc., break ground at Flushing Meadow Park for the nation's investor-owned electric utility industry's exhibit building.*

REMARKS BY WORLD'S FAIR AND ELECTRIC  
POWER & LIGHT OFFICIALS AT THE ELECTRIC  
POWER & LIGHT EXHIBIT GROUNDBREAKING  
CEREMONIES, NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR,  
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 1962.

GARLAND S. LANDRITH, JR. [General Manager, Electric Power & Light Exhibit, Inc.]: We are very happy that the sun decided to shine this morning on our exhibit groundbreaking ceremonies. I would like to introduce Mr. Ernest R. Acker, chairman of the board of Central Hudson Gas & Electric Company, chairman of the Edison Electric Institute's World's Fair Committee and president of Electric Power & Light Exhibit Inc., the organization set up by the investor-owned electric utility companies to administer this project at the New York World's Fair. Mr. Acker.

ERNEST R. ACKER: It is indeed a pleasure to be here today for this groundbreaking ceremony with my electric industry associates and with so many members of the World's Fair Corporation.

In opening these ceremonies, I should like to read a gracious message from Governor Rockefeller.

Dear Mr. Acker:

It affords me much pleasure to send cordial greet-

ings to all present at the groundbreaking ceremonies for the exhibit of the investor-owned electric utility industry in the coming New York World's Fair.

Beyond question this exhibit of your industry will be not only appropriate to the theme of the World's Fair, but will also be interesting, informative and vividly illustrative of this nuclear age in which we live. I am sure it will be something definitely worth seeing and worth studying.

With best wishes,

Sincerely  
Nelson A. Rockefeller

It was just eighty years ago this month in downtown Manhattan on Pearl Street that Thomas Edison made history by opening the world's first central generating station for what was then the large-scale production and distribution of electricity. Since that relatively recent date, America's investor-owned electric utility industry has paced the huge industrial and economic growth of the United States. Electricity in abundant quantities has become literally commonplace to Americans. But it has taken uncommon effort over the years to bring this silent servant to homes, industry and commerce throughout the nation.

Since we are here today to take the first formal step toward building our exhibit for the 1964-1965 New York

World's Fair, it might be appropriate to note that the electric power companies spend more money each year — over \$3 billion — on new construction than any other industry in the United States. And in keeping with the international flavor of a World's Fair, we can take pride in pointing out that through the combined efforts of the investor-owned utility companies, serving about 80 per cent of the electric customers, and governmental agencies, the United States is the greatest producer of electricity on earth — producing more electricity than the next six nations combined.

Without electricity, no modern industrial society can exist, and without full electrification, no nation can hope to compete in today's world. To maintain America's position of leadership, the investor-owned electric utilities will be spending about \$140 billion — I repeat billion — over the next twenty years to build power plants and transmission lines ahead of the constantly growing demand for electricity. That's a large sum — even by World's Fair standards.

Commissioner Moses has said the Fair will be dedicated to man's achievements on a shrinking globe in an expanding universe — his inventions, discoveries, arts, skills and aspirations. We honestly believe that the unique design of our building, expressed in the model here beside me, and the story told in our exhibit will contribute substantially

to this aim.

As you can see from this large-scale model, our exhibit building is a sort of pavilion of light prisms in an irregular pattern — resembling a Gothic "Cathedral of Light" — rising to a height of eighty feet and crowned by three vertical pylons rising another forty feet. The pylons will frame a super-brilliant shaft of light rising from a mass of searchlights within the central core of the building. This searchlight core will be visible to visitors through a vertical opening in the building as they approach the entrance and of course the shaft of light above the building will be visible from the surrounding countryside for many miles.

The vertically staggered triangular prisms are metallic shells, the exterior surfaces of which will be fluted with thin vertical fins of multi-colored metal so that as a visitor walks past the building in the daytime, it will appear to change color.

In addition to the brilliant tower of light after dark, the building will be bathed in colored lights. Once inside the building the Fair visitors will be carried through a dramatic show on an elevated revolving ring and will exit by a spiral ramp leading them past the core of the tower of light.

As our progress here indicates, we expect to begin major construction on this exciting project very shortly and well

*The Electric Power & Light Exhibit, Inc., depicted here, will consist of vertically staggered triangular metal prisms rising to a height of eighty feet. Crowning the pavilion will be three vertical pylons rising from a mass of searchlights within the central core of the building.*



before the rush of building activity next spring.

Because our groundbreaking today is, in a sense, commemorative of the 80th anniversary of the opening of Thomas Edison's Pearl Street Station, we are particularly honored with the presence of a member of the Edison family, John Edison Sloane, grandson of Thomas Edison.

Next, let me introduce Mr. Edwin Vennard, vice president and managing director of Edison Electric Institute, and vice president of our project.

Let me also introduce Mr. Alfred Stern, president of Robinson-Capsis-Stern Associates, Inc., the designers and producers of our show, and Mr. James Fitzgibbon, president of Synergetics, Inc., of Raleigh, North Carolina, architects and engineers for our project.

I would also like to introduce the chairman of our committee on exhibits, Mr. Ray Martin, of Consolidated Edison Company of New York. He and the members of his committee, many of whom are with us today, have been working closely with the designers and producers of the show, and are largely responsible for the interior exhibits in our building.

Before introducing the next speaker, I should like to say a few words about this man who, more than anyone else, is responsible for our being here today. For over 40 years, this master builder and civic planner has provided the creative thought and driving force that developed so

many of the greatest public works of our times including our matchless parks, beaches, and bridges and hundreds of miles of parkways and expressways, and of course the great Niagara Power Development.

He has served the people of New York under every Governor since Al Smith, and most recently has assumed the responsibility for the breathtaking 1964-1965 World's Fair project. With his inspiration and leadership the success of the project is absolutely assured. I refer, of course, to Commissioner Robert Moses.

ROBERT MOSES: I think I can say without exaggeration or hyperbole that this is really a wonderful building. Ordinarily I am not very keen on buildings that are built from outside in as compared to inside out. We have too many buildings that are simply monuments to the architects. But this is a beautiful building and you have room inside for everything you want to show. It will not only be attractive in the daytime, as Mr. Acker pointed out, but will be stunning at night. I don't know what I should say about this industry. I have been a sort of in-between, middle-of-the-road fellow in all this utility business. As head of the Power Authority here in New York at the beginning of our efforts way back in the early part of the first Smith administration, we were supposed to be the real left wing radicals and socialists — that is what they called

them at that time — and on the other side were the utility people. The two camps were just absolutely irreconcilable. I am not much on this irreconcilable business — the irresistible force and the immovable object — there is no sense in that and I think we have demonstrated, at least as far as the Power Authority of New York is concerned, that we can work in the greatest harmony, amicably with the electric industry. We have done that. For example, we are building a tie-line between the Niagara and the St. Lawrence system — a tie-line right in the middle — which in part is owned, controlled, operated, built and everything else by utility interests. It has been found out by the utility people that we don't have heads and horns and hoofs and tails and we are not as devilish as we were pictured at the beginning, and of course we have found that the utility people are good people to work with. There is no problem in bringing about some sort of basic agreement under which the resources — the electric resources, the power resources, the river resources — could be controlled at the source by the Government and then have the power distributed by the utility companies. I would not want to see any such system as has been planned in other states, under which everything from the development of water power and the dropping of the water through the penstocks to the lighting of the last lamp-post in the city, was done by the Government. I think it would be a very

unfortunate thing. I don't think it would work. Now we have a partnership there, as we have a partnership here at the Fair.

I have only one other thing to say. I am not going to attempt to evaluate or compare the sciences with the humanities — we could argue about that till the cows come home. There are people who want to spend all their time discussing why we don't devote more time to the humanities, the arts and all that kind of thing. We are devoting time to them. But what impresses our competitors most is this sort of thing, this sort of an exhibit. It is what we have done in the electrical field and what we have done in science which are, I am sure, the subjects to which the Russians are going to address themselves when we find out finally what they are going to do. They are impressed by this kind of thing; not by many other things we do, some of them good. They simply don't care about them.

The Fair has as one of its objects the free competition of ideas and inventions which is bound to command the respect of the very people we have to impress in the long run.

We are grateful to you for coming here. You are going to have our cooperation and I am sure this exhibit is going to be one of the great shows of the World's Fair.



*Speakers at recent Electric Power & Light Exhibit, Inc. groundbreaking ceremonies. Left to right: Garland S. Landrith, Jr., general manager of the exhibit, Ernest R. Acker, exhibit president, and Robert Moses, Fair president.*

#### **ELECTRIC POWER & LIGHT EXHIBIT, INC.**

**ERNEST R. ACKER, *President***  
**EDWIN VENNARD, *Vice President***  
**GARLAND S. LANDRITH, JR., *General Manager***  
**JOHN D. GRAY, *Treasurer***  
**C. R. BOZEK, *Assistant Treasurer***

#### **NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR 1964-1965 CORPORATION**

**Flushing 52, N. Y.**

**Tel.: 212-WF 4-1964**

**ROBERT MOSES, *President***  
**THOMAS J. DEEGAN, JR., *Chairman of the Executive Committee***  
**WILLIAM E. POTTER, *Executive Vice President***  
**CHARLES POLETTI, *Vice President, International Affairs and Exhibits***  
**STUART CONSTABLE, *Vice President, Operations***  
**WILLIAM A. BERNIS, *Vice President, Communications and Public Relations***  
**ERWIN WITT, *Comptroller***  
**MARTIN STONE, *Director of Industrial Section***  
**GUY F. TOZZOLI, *(Part of New York Authority) Transportation Section***  
**ERNESTINE R. HAIG, *Secretary of the Corporation and Assistant to the President***  
**WILLIAM WHIPPLE, JR., *Chief Engineer***



**UNISPHERE**

presented by  **United States Steel**

© 1961 New York World's Fair 1964-1965 Corporation

