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A CONGRESSIONAL TRIBUTE TO THE CITY OF BELLFLOWER ON THE OCCASION OF THE CITY'S 50TH YEAR ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION.

HON. LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD

OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 4, 2007

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the City of Bellflower and ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating its residents on the city's 50th Anniversary. I am proud to represent this unique city as part of my 34th Congressional District of California.

And while we honor 50 years of official incorporation, Bellflower's roots date back to 1784 when a Spanish leatherjacket soldier named Manuel Nieto received a 300,000-acre land grant on which to graze livestock. After Nieto passed away in 1804, his land was divided into five smaller ranchos that were distributed to his heirs in 1832. His daughter, Manuela Cota, received a 27,000-acre plot known as Rancho Los Cerritos. After several changes in ownership, the rancho was eventually purchased by Lewellyn Bixby during the 1860s. Bixby's brother, Jotham, who was selected to manage the ranch, divided the land into several sections, including a 4,000-acre area called Somerset Ranch. This is the land on which much of Bellflower as we now know it would eventually sit.

During the late 1800s, a settlement began to sprout up along the banks of the San Gabriel River, but the community remained small and the population numbered less than 100 through the early part of the 20th Century. The completion of a Pacific Electric Railway line through Somerset Ranch in 1905 and the vision of founders Emil Firth and Frank E. Woodruff to subdivide large ranches into town-sized lots provided a catalyst for growth. By 1912, Bellflower's population numbered more than 1,200.

Bellflower remained a rural community for many years

and became known for its dairy and poultry farming. Many Dutch, Portuguese, Hispanic and Japanese immigrants settled in the area to take advantage of the community's thriving agriculture industry, and by the late 1940s, Bellflower's population boomed to more than 44,000. As the town's population continued to grow, the community began to consider incorporation. And on Sept. 3, 1957, the proud community was granted a certificate of city incorporation and became California's 348th City.

Fifty years later, Bellflower has blossomed into a dynamic and diverse community of more than 77,000 people. The city has left its rural roots behind, and is now focused on attracting new, quality businesses to a community that houses more than 3,000 merchants. Bellflower also remains committed to community development and has several projects in the works that will help beautify an already attractive city, including the opening of Pirate Park – a pirate-themed play area, the restoration of the historic Pacific Electric Railway Depot and the development of the three-acre Palm Street Linear Park, which will feature bike and walking trails.

Bellflower will mark its 50th Anniversary in mid-October with a week of exciting events, including its annual Liberty Day Parade, a fireworks show, a cow-milking contest and several concerts. I'm honored to recognize this historic milestone in this city's rich history.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating Bellflower's first 50 years as this thriving community continues to live by its motto of "Growing Together" and works toward a prosperous future.