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Passes Are No Longer Needed at 9/11 Memorial

By **DAVID W. DUNLAP** MAY 16, 2014



Workers removing fences on Friday from the National September 11 Memorial, which visitors can now enter without tickets.

Hiroko Masuike/The New York Times

The National September 11 Memorial is now truly open — unimpeded and permanently —

to the public.

Ticketing has ended. Reservations have ended. Waiting for hours in snakelike lines has ended.

Beginning on Thursday afternoon, not long after President Obama left the museum, which he [had helped dedicate](#), visitors were permitted simply to enter the eight-acre memorial plaza from Liberty Street or Vesey Street. Just like that.

No announcement was made, though an understated notice appeared on the website of the [National September 11 Memorial & Museum](#) at the World Trade Center Foundation: “The 9/11 Memorial is open daily from 8:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Visitor passes are no longer required.”

No announcement was needed. There has always existed a kind of telepathic network — now enhanced by social media — through which New Yorkers manage to find the latest place to be even before word of its opening gets out. Despite the gloomy rain on Friday, several hundred people could be counted around the vast fountains that mark where the twin towers stood.

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[As 9/11 Museum Opens, These New Yorkers Will Stay Away](#) MAY 16, 2014



As the 9/11 Memorial Museum opens, its chief curator and officials at other New York institutions describe how they selected the objects by which future generations will remember Sept. 11, 2001.
Nicole Bengiveno/The New York Times

“Very gratifying,” said Michael Arad of Handel Architects, the designer of the memorial. “I was there yesterday afternoon and witnessed people walking down the street and onto the site. For the first time in 13 years.”

When the memorial opened in 2011, crowds were controlled because the trade center was one big construction site. Memorial officials intended to open the plaza as soon as the museum opened. That is to happen on Wednesday. Visitors to the museum will be charged admission of up to \$24 for adults. The entry pavilion, which sits on the plaza, is where security clearance will be conducted.

Paul Gunther, the former president of the Institute of Classical Architecture and Art, approached the plaza on Thursday night to inquire how he might leave a congratulatory bouquet for the museum's chief curator. Wearing a backpack, Mr. Gunther was expecting to run a gantlet to pass through security.

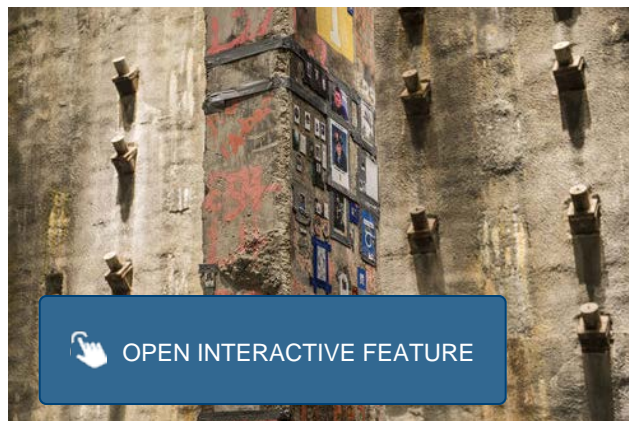
Instead, he found that the fences were wide open, although a security guard did approach him.

"Your bag is open," the guard said, pleasantly and helpfully. Mr. Gunther zipped the backpack closed and proceeded to the museum.

INTERACTIVE FEATURE

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A guided tour of the National September 11 Memorial Museum.



New York City police officers, uniformed private security guards and an explosive-sniffing dog were all in evidence on Friday. But across the great expanse of fountains, lawns and swamp white oak trees, they were unobtrusive. The most serious infraction seemed to involve a boy who stood on a bench to take a picture. He was gently shoed down by a guard.

The crowds were not to everyone's liking.

"I'm looking at the people here and thinking, 'Tourist, tourist, tourist,' " said Carrell Johnson, who worked for the New York Fire Patrol, a salvage corps supported by the insurance industry, on Sept. 11, 2001. "This is not an amusement park-type thing."

Mr. Johnson came to the memorial on Friday to meet his friend and former colleague Robert Renode Jr., who was driving a patrol truck and was badly injured on the morning of the attack. Mr. Renode was pinned to the ground when the south tower collapsed and, at first, taken for dead. His neck and lower back were injured and he now uses a walker.

Peter Walker of PWP Landscape Architecture, the landscape designers of the memorial, said the plaza was meant to have a dual function.

“This has always been about sadness and remembrance,” Mr. Walker said. “But it’s also about life. The trees are part of that. But it is also about the life of the city.”

And that life returned this week.

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