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A view of the Statue of Liberty as seen from the torch in an undated photo. A Hackensack-based company, Earthcam, has installed five webcams that offer stunning views from the statue not seen since 1916.

Liberating views

Torch webcams to debut on statue’s 125th anniversary

By **CRISTIAN SALAZAR**
and **RANDY HERSCHAFT**
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NEW YORK – Give me your tired, your poor – your Internet-connected masses yearning to see.

Lady Liberty is getting high-tech gifts for her 125th birthday: webcams on her torch that will let viewers gaze out at New York Harbor and read the tablet in her hands or see visitors on the grounds of the island below in real time.

The five torch cams are to be switched on Friday during a ceremony to commemorate the dedication of the Statue of Liberty on Oct. 28, 1886.

The ceremony caps a week of events centered around the historic date, including the debut of a major museum exhibition about poet Emma Lazarus, who helped bring the monument renown as the “Mother of Exiles.”

The statue’s webcams will offer views from the torch that have been unavailable to the public since 1916, said Stephen A. Briganti, the president of the Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation Inc.

“The statue is the most famous symbol in the world,” he said. “Most of the people in

the world have seen it, but they have not seen it like this. It will be a visit that so many people, including New Yorkers, have never taken before.”

Through the webcams, Internet users around the world will have four views, including a high-quality, 180-degree stitched panorama of the harbor with stunning views of Ellis and Governors islands. They will be able to watch as ships go by Liberty Island and observe as the new World Trade Center goes up floor-by-floor in lower Manhattan. They can get a fish-eye look at the torch itself as it glows in the night.

Hackensack-based company

The five cameras, which will be on 24 hours, seven days a week, were donated to the National Park Service by Earthcam Inc., a Hackensack-based company that manages webcams around the world.

The cameras put viewers on the balcony of the torch and high above the crown, said Brian Cury, the founder of Earthcam.

“This is not your dad’s picture of the Statue of Liberty,” he said. “This is not a view from a tourist helicopter. This is unique.”

Friday’s ceremony also will be marked by a water flotilla, actress Sigourney

Weaver reading Lazarus’ poem and a naturalization ceremony for 125 candidates for citizenship representing more than 40 countries.

Public invited

The public is invited to attend the ceremony, with ferry service available between Manhattan and Liberty Island. The interior of the statue – from the pedestal down to the museum base – will close after the 125th celebration for up to a year so that stairwells, elevators and mechanical systems can be upgraded.

The park itself will remain open to visitors.

The statue, designed by sculptor Frederic Auguste Bartholdi, was given by the French government to the U.S. as a token of friendship between the two countries and dedicated by President Grover Cleveland.

And while today it is known as a symbol of liberty for millions of refugees and exiles, initially the famous sonnet by Lazarus in the voice of the statue asking for “your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free” did not appear on the statue. It was not until 1903 that “The New Colossus” was placed on the pedestal.