



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Robert G. Ortt

Ortt's Amended Casino Funding Formula Included in State Budget

ANTOINETTE DELBEL April 1, 2016

| ISSUE: **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, JOB CREATION**



ALBANY –Senator Rob Ortt (R,C,I – North Tonawanda) today announced that lawmakers have agreed to include a portion of his proposal to alter and extend the 99-h law outlining slot profits for the Seneca Niagara Casino in the final 2016-17 state budget. The state's funding formula will now allot a percentage of slot machine revenue for three new entities, economic development and job creation.

“While I'm disappointed that the Governor and Assembly would not agree to swapping the funding formula to keep tens of millions of our local casino revenue here in Niagara Falls,

the end result of these negotiations is still a big win for the City of Niagara Falls,” **said Senator Ortt**. “This plan will protect our key community stakeholders while strengthening new ones that are so important to Niagara Falls’ economy and the quality of life. It will spark economic development with additional funding dedicated strictly to revitalizing the Falls block by block to attract more businesses and tourists.”

New community stakeholders include the WNY First Response & Preparedness Center, the Niagara Falls Housing Authority and Mount St. Mary’s Neighborhood Health Center. A portion of casino funding dedicated for the Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Area Commission will be redirected to the new entities. Each of the three entities will receive \$50,000 every year. The Underground Railroad Heritage Area Commission will now receive \$200,000 instead of \$350,000.

Niagara Falls Housing Authority Executive Director Stephanie Cowart said, “This essential funding will help the Niagara Falls Housing Authority continue to provide affordable and quality housing with a goal of developing sustainable families and stronger communities. We are extremely grateful to Senator Ortt for his advocacy on our behalf and his continued support for our services, revitalization efforts and community members.”

Gary C. Tucker, President and CEO of Mount St. Mary's Hospital said, “We commend Senator Ortt for his efforts in successfully including the Mount St. Mary's Neighborhood Health Center into the equation to receive a portion of casino funding. We are grateful for the opportunity to expand our services and better serve the underserved communities in Niagara County. We've planned to add behavioral health treatment options to our wide array of health services and now with this extra financial support, we will be able to make that happen.”

Current entities, such as the Niagara Falls City School District, Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center, the Niagara Tourism and Convention Corp. (NTCC), the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA), and city programs will continue to receive the same amount of revenue as they have been in previous years.

Also, separate from the local share of casino revenue, \$1.6 million in state funding will be awarded specifically for job creation and private-sector investment starting in the vicinity of the Seneca Niagara Casino. The allocation will be administered by the Niagara County Industrial Development Agency. The IDA will implement strict accountability to ensure casino dollars are going toward economic development and job creation and used transparently, effectively and efficiently.

The 99-h amended legislation reflects elements of Senator Ortt's "[Revitalize Niagara Plan](#)," which he first introduced to the public and proposed to the governor last November.

The 99-h law was set to expire at the end of this year, but has now been extended until Dec. 31, 2023, coinciding with the expiration date of the exclusivity compact between the Seneca Nation of Indians and New York State.