



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Suzi Oppenheimer

Oppenheimer Announces State Library Construction Grants

SUZI OPPENHEIMER May 16, 2011

| ISSUE: **EDUCATION, AGENCIES**

Senator Suzi Oppenheimer (D- Mamaroneck) today announced that the awarding of several public library construction grants in her Senate district. The grant funds are from \$14 million in capital funds that were made available for public library construction in the 2010 State Budget.

The **Mamaroneck Public Library** was awarded \$101,008 to improve library access and services and to complete construction of new library and children's room spaces. The **New Rochelle Public Library** has been awarded a \$50,000 grant to repurpose existing space for a teen area in the library and for new fixtures that will create energy costs savings. The **Rye Free Reading Room** was awarded \$100,000 for a reconfiguration of library space to create new Biography and Teen spaces, with fire system, electrical, cabling and computer improvements, as well as furnishing for the newly reconfigured spaces. The **Scarsdale Public Library** was given a \$111,280 grant for much needed building improvements and a multi-zone rooftop HVAC system that will boost library productivity and increase energy efficiency.

"New York's public libraries are in urgent need of renovation and upgrading," observed Senator Oppenheimer. "With public library usage at an all-time high, existing library facilities in my district have been stretched to the breaking point. These funds will be instrumental in creating more energy efficient, comfortable and productive spaces for

library patrons of all ages.”

A recent survey showed a documented need for public library construction and renovation projects totaling more than \$2.53 billion. More than 40% of the over 1,000 public library buildings in communities across New York are over 60 years old. Another 30% are more than three decades old. Many of New York’s local public libraries are unable to accommodate users with disabilities, are energy inefficient, cannot provide Internet and computer and other electronic technologies to users because of outdated and inadequate electrical wiring, and do not have sufficient space to house the library’s expanding collection, address the need for adequate meeting room, or provide for public access computers.

Project activities and expenditures eligible for grants from the \$14 million Public Library Construction Grant Program include financing construction of new library buildings, construction of additions to existing buildings, and the renovation and/or rehabilitation of existing space, including roof replacement, purchase and installation of alternative energy resources and new HVAC systems, windows, doors, and lighting systems, electrical upgrades, and construction of new or replacement of old walkways and parking lots, among other things. Renovations designed to provide accessibility for patrons with disabilities are high priorities.