



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

Counties Throughout The 51st Senate District Receive Emergency Grants

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ONEONTA, 12/20/11 – State Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I – Oneonta) today applauded the announcement that counties in the 51st senate district will receive nearly \$7 million through the Statewide Interoperable Communications Grant (SICG) program to improve emergency communications.

“A reliable communication network is an essential tool for emergency responders,” said Senator Seward. **“These grants will help provide that tool, protecting the lives of those who live and work in upstate New York, while also ensuring the safety of our firefighters, ambulance workers and police. The funding will also offset a major expense that taxpayers simply cannot afford to shoulder on their own.”**

The funding awards announced by the New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services will help with equipment purchases and other communication upgrades. It is included under a new, multi-year, competitive reimbursement program funded through the state cellular surcharge.

Complete list of grants awarded throughout the 51st senatorial district:

- Cortland County.....\$4,000,000;
- Otsego County.....\$1,128,000;
- Greene County.....\$893,000;
- Schoharie County.....\$858,000.

“It is worth noting that Cortland County is receiving the largest grant under this round of awards from the state. This speaks to the strength of the county’s grant application and also the vital need to upgrade emergency communications,” Seward added.

Senator Seward assisted Cortland County emergency officials with their grant submission and convened meetings with officials with the New York State Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Services earlier in the year to stress the importance of the project. He also advocated for approval of the award once the county’s application was submitted.

Senator Seward is a long-standing advocate for first responders. As chairman of the Senate Task Force on Volunteer Emergency Services, he helped establish a low interest loan program for the capital needs and equipment purchases of volunteer fire departments and emergency squads. Seward also won funding increases for the state fire academy to improve training for firefighters. He also sponsored special tax credits to give volunteers a break on their state tax returns.

“Our first responders risk their lives each time they answer an emergency call. Providing them with the tools they need to do their job is essential. Whether in the case of a natural disaster, a man-made tragedy, or other emergency situation, up to date communication equipment can mean the difference between life and death,” Seward concluded.