



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Timothy M. Kennedy

## Kennedy: \$250,000 in Funding to Boost Buffalo's Michigan Street African American Heritage Corridor Commission

TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY August 8, 2014

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Senator Tim Kennedy joined local and state leaders to highlight a \$250,000 funding award for the Michigan Street African American Heritage Corridor Commission. The corridor is a nationally and internationally recognized Buffalo neighborhood, serving as a focal point to residents and visitors learning about Buffalo's rich and diverse history. The efforts will increase the ability of the corridor to serve as an anchor for tourism.

"The preservation of our history is an investment in Buffalo's future, as we work to attract more visitors and foster the growth of our tourism economy," said Senator Kennedy. "The Michigan Street African American Heritage Corridor gives our community the unique opportunity to attract tourists to our area who will experience a true sense of the abolitionist movement and the history of civil rights. The Michigan Street Corridor will strengthen our city and better connect our central business district, the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus, our burgeoning waterfront and our resurgent downtown. This will help create new jobs and opportunities for Buffalo and Western New York."

"Today we are one step closer to making the Michigan Street African American Heritage Corridor a destination for residents, scholars and tourists to explore more of Buffalo's proud history" said Governor Andrew Cuomo. "This corridor honors the city's rich African American culture, and by attracting visitors to the area it will also help create jobs and new opportunities for the city's residents. I am proud that the state was able to play a role in making this project possible, and I look forward to seeing it draw new interest to Buffalo's rich past for years to come."

Lieutenant Governor Robert J. Duffy said, "As we look forward to and invest in Buffalo's bright future, it's increasingly important to honor its rich history. Thanks to Governor Cuomo's leadership, the Michigan Street African American Heritage Corridor will serve as a destination, stimulating the local economy and creating employment opportunities. I look forward to the corridor's contributions to the local community, and its role in recognizing the African American influence in shaping Western New York's past, present and future."

The funding was authorized last September through the Western New York Economic Development Fund, which is underwritten by the New York Power Authority's (NYPA) power proceeds initiative. Net earnings from sales of unutilized hydropower from NYPA's Niagara Power Project support the fund.

The corridor includes the Michigan Street Baptist Church, The Rev. Jesse E. Nash House Museum, The Colored Musicians Club Museum, and The Langston Hughes Institute. Themes included in the historic tours range from The Abolitionist Period all the way to the present day Buffalo Billion period.

The corridor starts at East Ferry Street and Masten Avenue and continues south to Woodlawn Avenue, then to Michigan Avenue, and ends at Swan Street, with several offshoots along the way. Those include Pine, Sycamore, Elm, William, Hickory and South Division streets.

Assemblywoman Crystal Peoples-Stokes said, “As a lifelong Buffalo resident, it is great to see The Michigan Street Corridor moving in the right direction. Governor Cuomo and I have identified tourism as a key strategy for economic growth. These places that highlight our African American history will draw visitors from far and wide to experience the abolitionist movement, the early civil rights Niagara Movement and the cultural arts. I applaud the NYPA for helping to support the preservation and appreciation of an important part of Buffalo’s past.”

Buffalo Mayor Byron Brown said, “Tourism is one of the major drivers for Buffalo’s economy and I congratulate New York State Assembly Member Crystal Peoples Stokes for her leadership efforts to revitalize the Michigan Street African American Heritage Corridor as a place to honor our rich heritage, boost tourism and bring additional employment opportunities to our city. Because of the importance of this area to our community, I’ve committed \$100,000 in this year’s budget, part of a 4 year \$400,000 investment.”

Gil C. Quiniones, NYPA president and chief executive officer, said, “The Michigan Street Corridor is one of Buffalo’s most prized cultural areas and offers historic attractions enjoyed by Western New Yorkers and tourists alike. Through a hydropower proceeds award

announced late last year, the Power Authority is proud to be supporting the revitalization of these attractions, which honor the rich legacy of African American contributions to Buffalo and our nation.”

The power proceeds board is comprised of the following members, appointed by Governor Cuomo: Chair Anthony Colucci III, managing attorney of the law firm of Colucci & Gallaher, in Buffalo; Deanna Alterio Brennan, president of the Niagara USA Chamber of Commerce; Brenda Williams McDuffie, president of the Buffalo Urban League; Dennis W. Elsenbeck, regional executive, National Grid Western Division; and Henry F. Wojtaszek, General Counsel for Off-Track Betting of Western New York, in Buffalo.

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