



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Ritchie to Honor North Country Individuals for Preventing Major Rabies Outbreak in Amish Community

PATTY RITCHIE May 7, 2015

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Senator to Present New York State Senate Liberty Medals at Friday Ceremony

State Senator Patty Ritchie will honor several individuals with the New York State Senate Liberty Medal on Friday, for their role in helping to prevent what could have been a major public health tragedy for the region's Amish population.

Last winter, St. Lawrence County Public Health officials discovered a horse owned by a local Amish family had contracted rabies, with their investigation indicating that the animal had come into contact with several people and other horses.

Struggling to get the word out to members of the Amish community, St. Lawrence Public Health called on Senator Ritchie's office for assistance. The Senator then reached out to a local veterinarian and a local business, who then partnered with Public Health to spread the word to the Amish, vaccinate animals and treat those who had been exposed to horses carrying the disease.

"Here in the North Country, we have a tradition of looking out for our neighbors," said Senator Ritchie. "I'm looking forward to recognizing those who played a role in stopping the spread of this deadly disease by stepping up in a time of genuine emergency to protect the public."

Senator Ritchie will present those being recognized with the New York State Senate's Liberty Medal, which one of the highest civilian honors a New Yorker can receive. Similar to the national Congressional Gold Medal, the award is given to individuals who have merited special commendation for exceptional, heroic or humanitarian acts and achievement on behalf of their fellow New Yorkers.

The special ceremony will take place at 11:00 a.m. at the St. Lawrence County Legislative Board Room, located in the Court House in Canton.