



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Timothy M. Kennedy

Kennedy Delivers: Critical Repairs to Major Lackawanna Roadways Underway After State Investment

TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY July 7, 2015

| ISSUE: **CITIES, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, LOCAL GOVERNMENT, TRANSPORTATION, COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT**



After Rough Winter, Milling and Paving Processes Begin to Revive South Park Avenue and Ridge Road

\$2.5 Million Grant Secured by Kennedy Will Repair One of Worst Stretches of Pothole-Riddled Roadways in Erie County

LACKAWANNA, NY – Senator Tim Kennedy (D-Buffalo) stood today with City of Lackawanna Mayor Geoff Szymanski to announce that construction has begun to repair

severely damaged portions of South Park Avenue and Ridge Road. The project, which was funded by a \$2.5 million grant secured by Kennedy last summer, will completely repave South Park from Lackawanna's north city limit to the south city limit, and Ridge Road from South Park to Abbott Road. Construction is expected to be completed by late September.

Lackawanna residents have long been frustrated by the deteriorating conditions of both roads. Over the last few winters, South Park has drawn criticism for harboring some of the worst potholes in Erie County. With residents and visitors using this road to reach year-round attractions such as the Botanical Gardens, Our Lady of Victory Basilica and our waterfront, municipal leaders were left grappling at ways to fix the worsening road conditions but were already strapped financially. Kennedy announced in August that he successfully secured the funds needed to repair these crumbling roads.

"Lackawanna is a city that has seen some hard times, but now more than ever it is moving towards a vision of revitalization, restoration and redevelopment. With this desperately needed paving project now underway, we're not only encouraging people to visit the city, we're encouraging them to stay," said **Senator Tim Kennedy**. "More than 11,000 drivers use South Park Avenue in Lackawanna every day, and traffic volume is even higher on Ridge Road. By improving the city's foundational infrastructure, this project will only further help connect Western New Yorkers to their every-growing waterfront, and enhance important cultural assets that call Lackawanna home."

"Lackawanna is the gateway to the Southtowns. With two Erie County landmarks within walking distance of one another- the Botanical Gardens and Our Lady of Victory Basilica- it is imperative that this road be repaired. The current condition of South Park Avenue only repels visitors from wanting to visit these cultural staples," said **Lackawanna Mayor Geoff Szymanski**. "With the funding secured by Senator Kennedy, residents and visitors will now be able to enjoy their trips to these destinations."

“I am grateful to Senator Kennedy and all those responsible for making this project possible,” said **Msgr. Paul Burkard, President of Baker Victory Services**. “It will greatly improve the quality of life for all of us who live and work on the Ridge Road and South Park crossroads, and I look forward to its completion.”

Amherst Paving is the lead company involved with project. Milling of the roads is currently underway, during which crews remove 5-6 inches of the surface of the street. The next phase of construction will include the repaving of the roads, and the final phase will focus on pavement striping, and the creation of a new middle turning lane.

For years, Lackawanna has faced financial challenges resulting from a strained tax base and rising costs. This has severely limited the local resources available for the rehabilitation of roads. Kennedy called on New York State to share the responsibility for the restoration and repair of South Park Avenue and Ridge Road in May 2014. He was joined in that call by Lackawanna Mayor Geoffrey Szymanski and the City Council. Kennedy also continues to push for legislation (S.1507 & S.1463) that would hand over the maintenance and ownership of both South Park Avenue and Ridge Road to New York State, providing permanent relief for the City of Lackawanna from the expensive maintenance costs associated with these heavily trafficked roads.

As a county legislator, Kennedy helped spearhead the South Park Avenue Revitalization Project, which led to the redevelopment of South Park Avenue in the City of Buffalo. The project, which had key city and federal support from Mayor Byron Brown and Congressman Brian Higgins, reconstructed South Park Avenue and instilled a new energy along this critical corridor through South Buffalo. Kennedy has long desired to extend this revitalization of South Park Avenue from Buffalo into the City of Lackawanna.

###

