



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Robert G. Ortt

Ortt Meets With Steering Committee and Tours Site for Proposed WNY First Response & Preparedness Center

ROBERT G. ORTT August 13, 2015

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Emergency Management Hub Will Quicken Response Time & Help Secure Niagara Falls Air Base

TOWN OF NIAGARA - Senator Rob Ortt (R,C,I – North Tonawanda) today met with steering committee members to discuss and tour the grounds of the proposed WNY First Response & Preparedness Center at the site of the former Niagara Falls U.S. Army Reserve Center in the Town of Niagara. The former hanger, located a few miles away from the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station and adjacent to the Niagara Falls International Airport, would serve as an

emergency operations hub and shared training facility for first responders, law enforcement agencies and community organizations. It'll aim to improve response time during extreme weather events or natural disasters.

Senator Ortt secured \$500,000 in the 2015-16 State Budget to design and construct the emergency hub while helping to strengthen base retention efforts for the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station.

"This project would be vital to emergency situations, such as last November's snowstorm, and would allow government agencies to quickly mobilize people, supplies and equipment," said Sen. Ortt. "During a life-threatening crisis, effective and timely response from emergency personnel could mean the difference between life and death. This First Response & Preparedness Center would help coordinate our efforts at the local, state and federal level, expanding emergency services across Western New York and ensuring maximum safety for our communities."

Additionally, Senator Ortt says the funds will ultimately help enhance the air base's strategic value within the Department of Defense and its economic importance to Western New York. The Air Reserve Station hopes to expand operations for crews – including local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies, volunteer firefighters, and Mercy Flight WNY – to utilize the base's hangers for emergency services purposes.

The WNY First Response & Preparedness Center steering committee is made up of individuals from several organizations, including the 107th Airlift Wing and Air National Guard, Mercy Flight, Inc., Niagara County Department of Economic Development, Niagara County Manager's Office, Niagara County Office of Emergency Management, Niagara County Sheriff's Office, Niagara County Industrial Development Agency, and the Town of Niagara's supervisor.

Pictured from left to right: Senator Ortt, Henry Sloma, Niagara County IDA Chairman and Craig Seymour with RKG Associates, a consulting firm for the town.