



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

O'Mara secures state funding for new Pulteney Free Library: O'Mara calls public library the focus of community activity and pride, and a cornerstone of education

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The public library is a cherished institution, a focus of civic activity and pride, a cornerstone of education, and a vital resource in so many ways for the community at large. That's especially true in a rural community like Pulteney.

Pulteney, N.Y., November 5—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I- Big Flats) today announced that he has secured \$75,000 in state funding to assist the construction of a new and expanded Pulteney Free Library to serve the families and residents of this rural community in Steuben County.

Earlier this spring, O'Mara joined Library Trustees, Library Director Barbara Radigan and members of the Building Team to celebrate the Library's receipt of land to construct a new building adjacent to the Pulteney Town Hall.

The Library currently shares building space with the Town Hall and has outgrown its section of the building. The new library will provide significantly expanded space, enhanced services and holdings, and lower the costs of operation through planned energy efficiencies. A fundraising effort remains underway in the community and library officials are working with the Southern Tier Library system to leverage additional state and federal funds. The \$75,000 in state funding O'Mara is providing will be utilized for the initial engineering and architectural expenses.

Construction on the new library is scheduled to begin in the Fall of 2017 and be completed in the Fall or Winter of 2018.

Library Director Barbara Radigan said, "The Pulteney Free Library is extremely pleased that Senator O'Mara has secured this state funding to assist in building our new library. The library, in existence since 1881, has never had a permanent home and this funding will enable us to build a library to serve our community well into the future."

O'Mara said, "The public library is a cherished institution, a focus of civic activity and pride, a cornerstone of education, and a vital resource in so many ways for the community at large. That's especially true in a rural community like Pulteney. I'm extremely pleased to be able to help support the construction of a new and expanded Pulteney Free Library, and I have to thank the trustees, the building team and Library Director Barbara Radigan for their perseverance and hard work to make this dream come true for the town of Pulteney. It's an exciting project. The new library is going to be a fantastic place for local residents and families, and I appreciate the chance to be part of such an important and enduring accomplishment."

Throughout his tenure in the Legislature, O'Mara has been a strong supporter of Southern Tier and Finger Lakes public libraries, recognizing their central importance to the civic, cultural and educational fabric of area communities. He has fought for increased state support for the Library Construction Grant Program. The 2016-17 state budget increased funding for the program by \$5 million to \$19 million, as well including \$95.6 million in state aid to public libraries, a \$4-million increase. It's important progress representing the highest aid level since 2008, according to the New York Library Association (NYLA).

Last night, at its 123rd Annual Conference and Trade Show in Saratoga Springs, the NYLA honored O'Mara with the association's 2016 "Outstanding Advocate for Libraries Award."

The NYLA is recognized as the voice of the library community in New York State. The oldest state library association in America, the NYLA represents school, college, special and public libraries, library staff, trustees, and students statewide. It is the only statewide organization dedicated to advocating on behalf of all libraries and library staff.

According to NYLA, the Outstanding Advocate Award presented to O'Mara "recognizes and honors an individual who, or a group that, has made a far reaching, sustained contribution to the promotion and/or support of library and information

services to the people of New York State or residents within a designated service area within the State.”

NYLA Executive Director Jeremy Johannesen said, “Our 2016 recipient, Senator Thomas O’Mara, understands the importance of libraries and how library systems are at the core of New York’s educational infrastructure. His advocacy has led to a multi-million dollar investment in broadband infrastructure to provide high speed connectivity to rural communities. He appreciates and understands the vital role that libraries must continue to play in education and within the 21st century economy. Senator O’Mara has consistently delivered for the libraries he represents across the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes, and library patrons statewide. We look forward to being able to work with Senator O’Mara for years to come on the challenges and needs that libraries will face.”

O’Mara noted that public libraries across New York State serve over 19 million patrons annually.

In September, O’Mara was also one of only seven members of the Senate to receive the 2016 “Library Champion Award” from New Yorkers for Better Libraries, a prominent library advocacy organization.