



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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Griffo applauds state funding to repair bridges in CNY

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO January 18, 2017

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State and local officials applauded the nearly **\$9.5 million** in state funding that has been secured to help municipalities in the region repair local bridges, including the Higginsville Road bridge in Verona that has been closed for years.

The funding was awarded by the state Department of Transportation through the state's BRIDGE NY program, which has invested \$200 million toward rehabilitating and replacing aging local transportation infrastructure across the state. Repairing and, in some cases, reopening these bridges is an important step in enhancing the infrastructure and mobility

that better enable communities to thrive economically, stated Senator Joseph Griffo, Assemblymembers Ken Blankenbush, Anthony Brindisi and Marc Butler, and Oneida County Executive Anthony Picente.

The following funds have been awarded to repair bridges in Oneida and Lewis counties:

- Higginsville Road Bridge, over Erie/Barge Canal in Verona: \$4.75 million
- Utica Street Bridge, over Oriskany Creek in Whitestown: \$1.33 million
- Hawkinsville Road Bridge, over Black River in Boonville: \$598,500
- Roberts Road Bridge, over Little Black Creek in Remsen: \$520,660
- Woodhull Road Bridge, over Woodhull Creek in Forestport: \$446,500
- County Road 41, over Whetstone Creek in Lewis County: \$1.81 million

For instance, the Higginsville Road bridge over the Erie/Barge Canal has been deemed unsafe and closed to traffic since 2008. For years this closure has not only inconvenienced people traveling between Vienna and Verona, but it has also created a risk to public safety by forcing emergency responders to seek longer alternate routes through Sylvan Beach in order to respond to calls in communities that otherwise would have used that bridge, Senator Griffo explained.

Knowing how much the community relied on this access point, Senator Griffo and Assemblyman Blankenbush voiced their concerns to the state Department of Transportation and, as a result, they are pleased that **\$4.75 million** in funding has been now provided to allow these long-awaited repairs to finally move forward.

Senator Joseph Griffo, R-C-I-Rome, said: “The vitality of a community often depends upon stable, safe and reliable transportation infrastructure like bridges, and so I am glad that the state has invested so much in these projects throughout Central New York. I understand the

challenges that many municipalities face in funding these repairs, and they often can't do it alone, so it is encouraging to see that the state is recognizing the needs of upstate communities to fix their infrastructure. The Higginsville Road bridge has been closed long enough, so I am pleased to do whatever I can to ensure that residents have access to the roadways that connect their communities."

Assemblyman Ken Blankenbush, R-C-I-Black River, said: "I am thrilled to see an investment being made into the bridge projects in our community. For years, I along with my colleagues throughout upstate have been advocating for the state to direct a fair share of funding to our communities, and it is good to see our efforts being rewarded. This announcement reaffirms our work has been well placed, and I look forward to this allocation of resources being put to good use."

Verona Town Supervisor Scott Musacchio: "This has been a long haul, and I'm sure there are going to be a lot of happy folks on both sides of the Higginsville Road bridge. I know Senator Griffo has been working on securing this bridge funding for a long time, so I want to thank him for his continued support, as well as Assemblyman Blankenbush and everyone else who helped make this happen. The closed bridge not only has been an inconvenience for years, but the biggest concern was from a standpoint of public safety with the extra 12 miles first responders would have to travel through Sylvan Beach to get to the other side of the canal in an emergency. This is a win for the people of Verona and Vienna."

Assemblyman Anthony Brindisi, D-Utica, said: "Investing in bridge repairs and other infrastructure improvements not only improves our region's quality of life, but helps encourage economic development. The bridges on this list are vital links that many people rely on. The Utica Street Bridge in Oriskany literally links one end of the village to the other, and is used by commuters, school buses, and village residents, and was in danger of being shut down by the Department of Transportation, which would have hurt a number of

business owners in the community. This funding is money well spent that will benefit these communities for many years to come.”

Assemblyman Marc W. Butler, R-C-I, Ref-Newport, said: “I am pleased to see more than \$1.1 million from the BRIDGE NY Initiative be invested right here in my district. Maintaining safe bridges is critical in keeping our communities connected and our economies growing. I will continue my efforts to improve state investment in our local infrastructure here in our region.”

Oneida County Executive Anthony Picente: “I’m pleased these state funds have been made available to our community, especially in the case of the Higginsville Road Bridge, which has been closed to the residents and emergency services of that area for some time. I hope to see further funding allocated in the future in order to address the many other areas of need in Oneida County.”

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