



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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Local public libraries awarded state grants: Area legislators say funding will help libraries undertake renovations, upgrades

THOMAS F. O'MARA June 7, 2017

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Elmira, N.Y., June 7—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats), Assemblyman Phil Palmesano (R,C,I-Corning) and Assemblyman Chris Friend (R,C,I-Big Flats) announced today that public libraries throughout their legislative districts have been awarded state library

construction grants.

The area legislators said the grants are awarded through New York's Library Construction Grant Program, which received \$19 million in the 2016-17 state budget to allocate this year's awards. In the 2017-18 state budget enacted earlier this year, the Legislature and Governor Andrew Cuomo increased funding for the program to \$24 million. These awards will be announced next spring.

In a joint statement, O'Mara, Palmesano and Friend said, "A public library is a fundamental resource for area families, seniors and countless other community residents. We're hopeful that these grants will help local libraries better afford and address their renovation needs.

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According to the **New York State Library**, which administers the grants, a recent survey estimated that the cost of public library construction and renovation needs statewide totals more than \$1.7 billion. More than 51% of the over 1,000 public library buildings across New York are over 60 years old. Another 33% are more than three decades old. Many of the state's local public libraries are unable to accommodate users with disabilities, and cannot provide Internet, computer, and other electronic technologies to users because of outdated and inadequate electrical wiring. They also do not have sufficient space to house the library's collection and lack sufficient space for public access computers.

The construction grants help libraries and library systems make renovations and upgrades, update electrical wiring to accommodate computer technology, renovate facilities to provide

wheelchair accessible entrances and become fully accessible to persons with disabilities, and provide community meeting rooms.

O'Mara, Palmesano and Friend announced the following grants to area libraries:

- > Steele Memorial Library (Chemung County), \$202,421 to construct a new teen space;
- > Southern Tier Library System (Steuben), \$96,825 to construct dark fiber to six member libraries to improve Internet connectivity;
- > Cohocton Public Library (Steuben), \$9,000 for energy efficiency upgrades to install a new ceiling, LED fixtures, and housing for the HVAC system;
- > Pulteney Free Library, \$61,800 for a new library facility;
- > Wayland Free Library, \$39,140 to install new data drops; and
- > Tompkins County Public Library, \$49,735 to renovate the two restrooms in the library's east wing.

In addition to the above awards, Palmesano's 132nd Assembly District also includes a portion of Seneca County and the following Seneca County libraries within Palmesano's district will receive grants:

- > Edith B. Ford Memorial Library, \$185,401 to purchase adjoining property to expand the existing building; and
- > Lodi Whittier Library (Elizabeth Garnsey Delavan Library), \$141,112 to finish interior work on new library building.

Friend's 124th Assembly District includes Tioga County where the Apalchin Library Association will receive \$126,076 to add a young adult space, and meeting, workshop and program space. The funding will also be used to expand WiFi access.

In 2015, the area lawmakers sponsored a new law (Chapter 480 of the Laws of 2015) that, for the first time, included "installation and infrastructure of broadband services" as a specific project category eligible to receive funding through the Library Construction Grant Program. Prior to the law's enactment, libraries were unable to access funding through the popular grant program specifically for broadband purposes including cable, wiring and modems, and network terminals and access points.