



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Chris Jacobs

## Jacobs Provides Funding Boost to Build Cradle Beach STEM Center

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(Angola, NY) – New York State Senator Chris Jacobs (60<sup>th</sup> SD) announced a major funding award of \$500,000 to support the construction of a new Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) Education Center at Cradle Beach Camp. The Western New York STEM Center for Youth will become a year-round destination for school groups and youth agencies seeking to provide hands-on experiential learning. The estimated cost of the project is slightly under \$1 million.

“I am very pleased to have been able to secure such a significant portion of the overall funding for this great project,” said Senator Jacobs. “In our increasingly technology based world, STEM education is vital to our children’s future and the economic viability of our region. This new center is a tremendous step forward in enhancing the STEM learning process, and making it far more appealing and interesting to students.”

Jacobs made the announcement at the site of the future building. In addition to Cradle Beach executives, representatives from the University at Buffalo’s Interdisciplinary Science & Engineering Partnership (ISEP), Buffalo State College, and the Buffalo Museum of Science attended the press conference. The groups are important collaborators with Cradle Beach on current STEM programming, and the new center will allow all the parties to augment their existing relationships.

“The Western New York STEM Center for Youth will provide a vital asset to our community and region, allowing us to expand strategic collaborations between formal STEM educators and STEM-centric organizations,” said Ann-Marie Orłowski, Cradle Beach Chief Executive Officer. “The Center will enhance opportunities for women, minorities and K-12 students who may otherwise rule out STEM careers early in their education. Bringing experiential-based STEM instruction to life will have a tremendous impact on thousands of children for decades to come.”

An urgent need exists to produce more STEM graduates to meet future workforce needs to maintain our region’s competitiveness. STEM occupations in the United States are growing at 17%, reaffirming that these careers and skill sets will continue to be major drivers of our economic revitalization.

Jacobs, and all involved in the project believe that the new facility’s experiential programming will have a significant impact in creating greater interest among young

students that will eventually lead to more STEM graduates in the future.

“ISEP Partners have helped define an informal, out of classroom STEM education initiative that takes advantage of the amazing location of Cradle Beach,” said Dr. Joseph Gardella, SUNY Distinguished Professor and Director of ISEP. “The plan to build a very unique STEM education center will clearly benefit children with disabilities and children with disadvantages served by Cradle Beach, but it also will become a year round facility for all WNY school districts to utilize.”

Jacobs has been a long-time advocate for increasing educational opportunities for children in need. In 1995, he founded the BISON Scholarship Fund, and served for many years on the Buffalo School Board.

“The new Western New York STEM Center for Youth is a tremendous project to invest in,” said Senator Jacobs. “It incorporates Cradle Beach’s mission of serving underprivileged and disabled students while addressing a critical need in the education of our children,” he concluded.