



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Ritchie Secures \$500,000 to Enhance Customer Service at Watertown International Airport

BRIAN DWYER November 27, 2018

| ISSUE: **AIRPORT WORKERS, MAJOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS**



At the Watertown International Airport Tuesday, Jefferson County Legislators and airport officials joined State Senator Patty Ritchie, as she announced she has secured \$500,000 for the airport to make a critical upgrade that will enhance customer service by speeding up the process for passengers retrieving checked baggage.

The airport will use the funding to install a motorized baggage handling system that runs between the secure and public areas of the airport; allowing for not only larger luggage and baggage, but also a more efficient return of checked baggage to passengers and decreasing wait times by as much as 30 minutes.

“In recent years, the Watertown International Airport has made a number of improvements that have led to a significant increase in passengers and growth in our region’s economy,” said Senator Ritchie. “This new system will allow for decreased baggage wait times, improve the arrival experience for customers and give people yet another reason to choose the Watertown International Airport when making travel plans.”

In addition to this project, the Watertown International Airport recently finished a major renovation to its terminal and increased the size of its runway. The larger runway has allowed for the introduction of a larger jet for jet for its flights to Philadelphia and in turn, has helped the airport shatter monthly traveler records. In 2017, 50,000 passengers utilized the airport, helping it to qualify for \$1 million in federal funding.

“These enhancements will be the capstone project for our recently renovated terminal here at the Watertown International Airport,” Jefferson County Board of Legislators Chairperson Scott Gray said. “With this new system, we are ensuring that not only are airport employees able to more easily transport passenger baggage, but to do so more safely and securely. I am confident this new service will only make customers even happier they chose to travel through Watertown and we cannot thank Senator Ritchie enough for her support.”

“This new baggage handling system is a major step in our efforts to improve the experience of each and every customer that puts their trust in us,” Jefferson County Legislator Phil Reed said. “I want to thank Senator Ritchie for understanding how important our customers are, and their satisfaction is, to our mission of making this airport into something truly

special.”

“We thank the Senator for her support of the airport—and for not only her success in securing funds for this project, but numerous projects that are allowing us to reach our goals and have a true, positive impact on our community,” Watertown International Airport Manager Grant Sussey added.

In September, Senator Ritchie announced she had secured \$200,000 for the Watertown International Airport to add a second travel carrier, which will allow it to soon add a second, non-stop destination; enhancing travel options for customers, including the soldiers, families and guests of Fort Drum.