



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Ritchie Applauds Planned Transformation of Cleveland Elementary into New DEC Training Academy

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State Senator Patty Ritchie joined local and state officials this week at special event to announce the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's (NYS DEC) planned transformation of the former Cleveland Elementary School into a new training academy for future DEC Environmental Conservation Officers (ECOs) and Forest Rangers.

"The DEC's ECOs and Forest Rangers play a very important role in protecting our state's natural resources and its people," said State Senator Patty Ritchie.

"Their ability to train in a proper setting is absolutely critical to not only their mission, but also their safety on the job. I am excited that this building will be put back into use and would like to thank the Governor and Commissioner Seggos for recognizing that Oswego County is a perfect place to prepare future ECOs and Forest Rangers for success in their new careers."

Constructed in 1952, Cleveland Elementary was closed in 2014 due to declining enrollment. In addition to the DEC using the building as a basic training academy, other department divisions and staff for a number of DEC programs will also utilize it.

In 2018 alone, the DEC says its 288 police officers responded to nearly 22,000 calls and worked on cases that ranged from poaching and waste dumping to black market pet trade. Also during that time, 135 forest rangers conducted nearly 350 search

and rescue missions and extinguished more than 100 wildfires.

(Attn. Photo Editors: Pictured from left to right in the attached photo are Laureen Tackman, Mayor of the village of Cleveland, Andrew Martin, President of the Central Square Central School District School Board, Tom Colabufo, Central Square Central School District Superintendent, Matthew Marko, DEC Region 7 Director and State Senator Patty Ritchie)