



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Timothy M. Kennedy

## Senator Tim Kennedy Joins Cheektowaga Supervisor, First Responders to Announce Critical State Funding to Enhance Town's Emergency Response System

TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY November 6, 2020

| ISSUE: **CORONAVIRUS; COVID-19; FIRST RESPONDERS, POLICE OFFICERS, FIREFIGHTERS**



*New State Funding Will Allow the Town to Create a State-of-the-Art Emergency Radio System and Develop a Third Interoperable Radio Channel, Enabling Responders to Communicate More Effectively During Emergencies and Saving Local Taxpayers from Footing the Bill*

CHEEKTOWAGA, N.Y. – Senator Tim Kennedy (D-Buffalo) joined Cheektowaga Supervisor Diane Benczkowski, Assistant Chief of Police Brian Gould, Cheektowaga firefighters,

members of the Cheektowaga Town Board, and Saia Communications Friday to announce \$500,000 in state funding for an Emergency Communications Radio System that will allow the Town's first responders to better communicate during emergency situations. For years, first responders in the Town of Cheektowaga have relied on aging radio technology, which often had weak signals in certain neighborhoods due to outdated radio infrastructure. Many times, firefighters and police officers communicating via hand held portable radios experienced poor and unreliable signals due to the antiquated system. This new state funding will not only upgrade the radio infrastructure and strengthen emergency signals, but it will ultimately save taxpayers money long-term.

"When first responders and leadership in Cheektowaga first brought this issue to my office's attention, we knew right away that we needed to help. First and foremost, it was evident that this outdated system is a significant detriment to our police and first responders, and a threat to overall public safety. But it was also clear that this system needed to be updated regardless, and if we didn't step in, that cost would ultimately be passed on to taxpayers - a cost that would only feel magnified during the COVID-19 crisis," said **Senator Tim Kennedy**. "I'm proud to deliver this money for Cheektowaga, so that our police and firefighters have access to the effective communication tools they need when responding to an emergency, and so that they can serve our community with the proper support they deserve."

"The Town of Cheektowaga has been faced with the quandary of how to pay for the huge expense involved for these necessary upgrades to our Emergency Communications Radio Infrastructure until Senator Kennedy learned of our dilemma," said **Cheektowaga Supervisor Diane Benczkowski**. "I thank Senator Kennedy for his work in acquiring the necessary funding in seeing these safety improvements come to fruition, while lessening the tax burden on the Cheektowaga residents."

“This funding will allow the Town of Cheektowaga to make critical improvements to the police and fire radio system, improvement that will increase the safety of our police officers and firefighters as well as our residents,” said **Cheektowaga Assistant Chief of Police Brian Gould**. “The Cheektowaga Police Department is grateful for the cooperation between the Town Government and the Senator’s office in regards to making funds available to complete this critical project.”

“The existing equipment for the Public Safety first responders has been in service for over 15 years. This project has been in the works for over three and ½ years,” said **Mike Saia, Vice President of Saia Communications**. “This system was engineered by Saia from the ground up to provide public-safety grade infrastructure and fault tolerance. The primary equipment manufacturer (Leonardo/Selex) was the only provider that offered a 5-year warranty and 10-year non-obsolete on their product. A local manufacturer (TX/RX) from Angola, NY, also provided critical equipment in selecting manufacturers.”

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