



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

## Announcement of Landmark Agreement Between the State and Seneca Nation Held in Salamanca

CATHARINE YOUNG July 31, 2013

| ISSUE: **NATIVE AMERICANS, GAMING**

SALAMANCA – It has been 35 years since a Governor has personally visited Salamanca with good news, according to state Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I - Olean).

Governor Hugh Carey drove a bulldozer to break ground for Route 17 – now Interstate 86 – in Salamanca during July of 1978.

Today, Governor Andrew Cuomo ended the long, dry spell by making a joint appearance with Seneca Nation of Indians President Barry Snyder, Sr. in front of an enthusiastic crowd at the Salamanca City Central School District. The leaders announced \$350 million in casino revenue payments by the Senecas to the state and local governments - welcome news to a community that has been struggling financially.

The pair had made a similar announcement earlier in the day in Niagara Falls, which also has been strapped by the lack of casino revenue sharing. The Senecas operate three casinos in the region – one each in Salamanca, Niagara Falls and Buffalo.

These payments, which had been withheld over a four-year dispute about gaming at the Hamburg, Batavia and Finger Lakes race tracks, include funding for the Salamanca city

government and school district, and Cattaraugus County.

Recently, the sides announced an agreement that would grant the Senecas an exclusive Western New York zone to operate its casinos, and allow the race tracks to keep their existing video lottery terminals.

President Snyder handed over an oversized \$350 million presentation check to the Governor, who in turn, gave a similar-sized \$34.5 million check to Salamanca Mayor Carmen Vecchiarella to cover the local governments' share.

The money comes as a relief to the localities, who have struggled to make up the lost payments as they have been caught in the crossfire of the disagreement between the state and Nation. Layoffs and service cuts have occurred, and the city was brought to the brink of bankruptcy due to an erosion of the tax base and the lack of funding to make up for the loss. Loans included in the past two state budgets have saved the city from insolvency.

The payments bring a new day to the region, allowing the city to restore essential services, the school to provide enrichment to students, and the county to pursue economic development endeavors, according to Senator Young.

"This occasion marks a significant turning point in the relationship between the state and the Nation, ensuring that everyone is treated fairly. I commend the Governor, President Snyder and the Tribal Council for forging this historic partnership. We can move forward, and the community is ecstatic that they will receive the funding that they need so much," Senator Young said.

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