



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

Schoharie, Delaware First Responders Receive State Grants

JAMES L. SEWARD September 20, 2012

| ISSUE: **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, LOCAL GOVERNMENT, FIREFIGHTERS, TELECOMMUNICATIONS, CELL PHONES**



NORTH BLENHEIM, 09/19/12 – State Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I–Oneonta) today joined representatives of the New York Power Authority (NYPA) and local officials to present more than \$207,000 in grants to nine first-responder organizations in Schoharie and Delaware counties to rebuild equipment and systems capabilities after Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee. The grants were announced in August by Governor Cuomo, among other state initiatives to aid communities affected by last summer's storms. NYPA today also issued a

request for proposals (RFP) to improve cellular and wireless communications at the Blenheim-Gilboa power plant and across the Northern Catskills.

"It's heartening to be here and realize how far we have come since last summer's storms," said Senator Seward. **"We owe much of the progress we have made to the work of our heroic first responders and partnerships like the one we are celebrating today. These funds, generously donated by the New York Power Authority, will help make our resilient community even stronger."**

"These grants will be a shot in the arm for first responder organizations that lost supplies and had equipment damaged during Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee," Governor Cuomo said. "The state will continue to rebuild communities that were hit the hardest, as well as work to improve our emergency preparations. With these funds, fire and rescue squads in Schoharie and Delaware counties will be able to bolster their resources so New Yorkers are protected during storms and emergency situations."

The volunteer organizations receiving grants include the Blenheim Hose Company, Conesville Fire Department, Conesville Rescue Squad, Grand Gorge Fire Department, Grand Gorge Rescue Squad, Jefferson Fire Department, Jefferson Rescue Squad, Middleburgh Emergency Volunteer Ambulance Corp. and Middleburgh Fire Department. The grants are for equipment and training, such as wet suits, trailers for transporting all-terrain vehicles, water rescue instruction, hydraulic stretchers, portable generators and more.

NYPA annually provides funds to the first responder organizations that are receiving grants today, usually in the range of \$2,000. Following the severe flooding and damage from last summer's storms, the state together with NYPA approached these organizations and offered one-time grants for larger needs.

NYPA today issued a Request for Proposals to improve cell-phone coverage primarily along the Route 30 corridor from Grand Gorge to Middleburgh, helping address shortcomings in

area cell communications that became apparent during last summer's storms. An appropriately sized plot of NYPA land will be made available to the selected bidder for a commercial cellular communications service facility. The RFP can be downloaded through the [New York Power Authority website HERE](#).

Senator Seward added, **“A reliable communication network is an essential tool for emergency responders. Upgrading the communications system at Blenheim-Gilboa, along with enhancing overall wireless coverage for the region will protect lives and property, while also ensuring the safety of our first responders who risk their lives each time they answer an emergency call. Expanding the reach of cell service through more of Schoharie and Delaware counties’ rural region is also needed to encourage business growth and enhance the quality of life for residents.”**

Gil C. Quiniones, NYPA president and chief executive officer, said, "We want to express our thanks to each and every member of the first-responder teams, not only for your work during last summer's storms and the aftermath, but for your availability to respond to emergency situations at our Blenheim-Gilboa power plant over its nearly three decades of operation. You play a valuable role as our first-line responders and we're happy to support the essential services you provide, in contributing to the measures spearheaded by Governor Cuomo for improving area emergency preparedness."

Assembly Member Pete Lopez said, "We are extremely proud of our volunteer firefighters and EMS responders who worked tirelessly in response to the devastation of Tropical Storms Irene and Lee, and I am glad to be part of today's event in support of their continued operation. With the new equipment and training that will be made possible by these Power Authority funds, they will be even better prepared for any future emergencies."

Kevin Neary, Acting Director, Schoharie County Emergency Management Office, said, "The funding by the Power Authority will be put to good use for bolstering the emergency-response preparedness of our fire departments and rescue squads. We appreciate the Power Authority's support, including its seeking to improve cellular and wireless communications

in areas surrounding its Blenheim-Gilboa power plant."

-30-