



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

Belmont Literary and Historical Society Free Library To Receive Major Upgrades Thanks To Grant Funding From Senator Young

CATHARINE YOUNG December 11, 2015

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BELMONT – Located in a 111-year-old building, the Belmont Literary and Historical Society Free Library has had a lasting impact on generations of the town’s residents. But with increasing demands for greater access to books, public programming, and modern resources like computers and high speed internet, the library had begun exploring avenues to grow.

Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I- Olean) has secured a \$50,000 capital grant that will be used toward major renovations to help spur that growth.

The second floor of the Belmont Library, which for many years served as a social center for community dinners, dances, wedding receptions, and other events, was rented to the Department of Water Conservation during the 1970s and '80s after seeing a decrease in use by members of the community. However, after the department ceased operations in the building, the room was converted into storage.

With a growing demand for space from local organizations like the Rotary, the library board contacted Senator Young to inquire about possible assistance. After hearing from the library, Senator Young went to work to obtain funding for the project, which culminated in today's announcement of a \$50,000 grant awarded through the Senate that will help make the renovation dream a reality.

"Libraries are a fundamental part of every community and nowhere is this more evident than in Belmont. The staff at the library is so enthusiastic about its duties, and the library serves as a gathering place for everyone. The community recognizes their library is a treasure and they have always come together to support it," said Senator Young.

"The Belmont Library has great historical and sentimental value, and continues to serve as a resource for people of all ages. The library provides learning opportunities for our young people, and on-line access for job seekers and senior citizens. When the expansion project is complete, the library will be even better able to serve our area," she said.

The entire project is estimated to cost just over \$52,000 and includes extensive renovations to the building to bring it into compliance with current building codes.

In the front stairwell, wooden stairs leading to the second floor will be stripped of existing paint, stained, sealed and coded treads will be installed to ensure safe footing. The existing banister and spindles will also be refurbished and modernized to meet current state building codes. A stair lift will be installed to enable those who cannot negotiate stairs the opportunity to participate in activities held in the renovated space.

On the second floor, two original doors, which had previously been removed, will be restored in keeping with the building's original character. The reading area floor, which is currently old bare painted wood, will be carpeted. Existing windows will be fixed and the sills will be painted and repaired. Electrical work will be completed in the kitchen area to accommodate a stove and refrigerator, and cabinets will be installed in the restroom, kitchen and director's office.

In the second floor back stairway, the handrail will be replaced with a coded railing, cracks in the plaster will be filled in, and the stairs will be sanded and painted. The floor at the bottom of the stairs will be removed and replaced, the original door will be sanded and painted, and the outside wall will be insulated.

Finally, on the first floor, cracks in the plaster wall will be filled in, insulation will be installed in the outside walls, and a closet will be built with a pocket door to save space. In the restroom, the doors will be sanded and painted and the walls will be patched. A new floor will also be installed in the kitchen and restroom areas.

“On behalf of the Belmont Library and its board of trustees, I'd like to thank Senator Young for her continued support for this project and for being a steadfast advocate for the many libraries within the district. We so appreciate the work that you have done for us here,” said Kevin Crouch, President of the Belmont Free Library Board of Trustees. “I'd also like to mention Donna DiGirolamo, without whom this project would never have progressed this

far. She, along with the Belmont Rotary, have been the driving force. Many thanks. Thanks also to Vice President Meredith Chilson and the rest of the board for all their efforts as well.”

“The library trustees and staff are very grateful to receive this wonderful grant. The Belmont Free Library is the center of activity for the community. This grant will allow us to properly upgrade our historic building so current and future generations can continue to come together and celebrate all our town has to offer. Thank you to Senator Young and everyone who worked to make this possible,” said Carrie Jefferds, Director for the Belmont Free Library.

“I loved this library as a child, and brought many of my students here to receive their first library cards when I became a teacher in Belmont. This wonderful old building has served our community so very well over the years. Now, thanks to the concern and determination of Senator Young, we will be able to continue to restore and renovate the Belmont Free Library to ensure its availability for years to come. Senator Catharine Young once again proves to her constituents that no community project is too small to be considered when there is a true need. We appreciate the funding she has secured for this project and her faith in us as a community to see it through,” said Donna DiGirolamo, co-Chair for the renovation project.