



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Robert G. Ortt

## Ortt Secures Additional State Funding for WNY First Response & Preparedness Center

ANTOINETTE DELBEL February 29, 2016



**TOWN OF NIAGARA** – Senator Rob Ortt (R,C,I – North Tonawanda) today announced he has secured half a million dollars in state funds to aid in the planning, designing and construction phases of his proposed WNY First Response & Preparedness Center (FRPC). This \$500,000 in capital funding is in addition to the \$500,000 in state funds Senator Ortt secured last summer for the emergency hub in order to help with base retention efforts for the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station.

The facility in the Town of Niagara would serve as an emergency operations hub to improve response capabilities across the region for natural disasters, weather-related issues, or national security threats. The FRPC would also serve as a training facility for first responders, law enforcement agencies and community organizations.

“The First Response & Preparedness Center would assemble agencies from across the region that specialize in various emergency, public health, safety and terrorism threats,” **said Senator Ortt**. “Not only would it allow for better response time, it would also improve communication and emergency management through a coordinated effort at the local, state and federal levels. In today’s day and age, we need to be vigilant, prepared and ready at all times.”

Senator Ortt secured the \$500,000 in capital funding as part of the 2015-2016 State Budget. The state funds can be used toward projects for construction, renovation, planning and design costs. The allocated money is not allowed to exceed more than 70 percent of the total costs of the project.

The former Niagara Falls U.S. Army Reserve Center, located at 9400 Porter Road in the Town of Niagara, would be redeveloped into the FRPC. The transformation of the vacant property would be overseen by the Town of Niagara and Niagara County in a joint partnership with stakeholders from across the state. The 19-acre site features more than 150,000 square feet of building space, including a 34,000 square-foot aircraft hanger.

**Town of Niagara Supervisor Lee Wallace said,** “The Town of Niagara is an ideal location for the FRPC considering Niagara County’s reputation for experiencing less severe weather than its southern neighbors and the close proximity to the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station, the Niagara Falls International Airport and the Canadian border. Located only a few miles away from the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station, the First Response & Preparedness Center would help with the base’s retention efforts and strategic value within the Department of Defense.

It would also allow ensure the safety of our communities, region and state as a whole. I am pleased Senator Ortt is doing everything he can to make sure this project comes to fruition.”

Potential tenants and users of the facility include and are not limited to: Mercy Flight of WNY; Niagara County Emergency Services; Niagara County Sheriff's Office; Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority Police; New York Air National Guard and Army National Guard units; U.S. Customs and Border Protection Buffalo Sector; U.S. Coast Guard Sector Buffalo; American Red Cross WNY Chapter; NYS Police; local police and fire departments; Niagara County Community College and other academic institutions with public safety and emergency preparedness programs.