



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

Seward Delivers \$250k for Big Indian-Olivera Fire Department Expansion

JEFF BISHOP, COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR July 14, 2016

| ISSUE: **VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS, FIRE SAFETY, LOCAL GOVERNMENT**



SHANDAKEN, 07/13/16 – State Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I-Oneonta) today joined members of the Big Indian-Olivera Fire Department to unveil plans for the company’s fire house expansion. Senator Seward secured \$250,000 in state funding to assist in the much needed expansion.

“In our small rural towns, residents look to their first responders in times of crisis and for so many other community needs year-round,” said Senator Seward. **“In the Town of Shandaken, the Big**

Indian-Oliverea Fire Company is a true community beacon and expanding and modernizing the fire house will further enhance the firefighters' ability to keep people and property safe and serve the public."

Town of Shandaken Supervisor Rob Stanley said, "Public safety is our number one responsibility. Senator Seward understands that and I want to say thank you on behalf of the entire town board for making the safety and well being of the residents of Shandaken a priority."

In August of 2011, Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee left a portion of the community cut off without power, phone or cell services, or passable roads for over a week. For 15 days, the Big Indian-Oliverea fire house served as a community shelter housing National Guard troops and others who were displaced from their homes. The fire house was also a collection point for donation and the main gathering place for anyone in need of respite.

Big Indian-Oliverea Fire Company Chief John "Jody" Rossitz said, "Our fire crews must be prepared for a multitude of possible emergency situations. As we saw in 2011 during Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee, even our best laid plans can at times need to be adjusted. This expansion will better equip the department to deal with major disasters and everyday concerns. Senator Seward's support was imperative and we truly appreciate his effort to make this plan a reality."

"While the Big Indian-Oliverea Fire Company is technically a volunteer department, the men and women who serve here are true professionals and their actions over the years bear that out. I am proud to partner with the fire company and am confident this state grant will lead to a safer Shandaken," Seward added.

The fire department improvement/expansion project will be constructed on available land adjacent to the existing structure, doubling the building's size and including: additional equipment bays; energy efficient lighting, heating, and cooling systems; new ADA bathrooms

with showers; community room with shelter space; storage space; resurfaced parking areas.

The entire project is estimated to cost \$285,000 with additional funding coming from the Big Indian-Olivera Fire Company Ladies Auxiliary, the fire company itself, and in-kind contributions

The Big-Indian Olivera Fire Company covers a 42.5 square mile fire district in the Town of Shandaken.