



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

## Seward Delivers Critical Funding for Otsego County Emergency Communications

JEFF BISHOP, COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR August 3, 2016

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**COOPERSTOWN, 08/03/16** – State Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I-Oneonta) and Assemblyman Bill Magee (D-Nelson) today announced a pair of grants totaling \$1 million to help fund a major upgrade to Otsego County’s telecommunications system. Senator Seward and Assemblyman Magee are each providing \$500,000 in capital funding through the State and Municipal Facilities Program.

Senator James L. Seward said, **“It is imperative that our law enforcement officials and emergency responders have the tools they need when they are called into duty, starting with a reliable communication network. This grant funding will help protect the lives of those who live and work in Otsego County, while also ensuring the safety of our firefighters, ambulance workers and police. The funding will also offset a major expense that taxpayers simply cannot afford to shoulder on their own.”**

Assemblyman Bill Magee said, “Otsego County has made great strides in updating their emergency communications network and the residents here and in neighboring counties will be safer thanks to the new system. It is my pleasure to work to secure this much needed funding that will help see this project to its completion.”

Otsego County Board of Representatives Chairman Kathy Clark said, “Public safety is always at the top of our priority list. Senator Seward and Assemblyman Magee’s assistance means a great deal as Otsego County officials work to provide essential services to our residents and businesses and, at the same time, keep property taxes in check.”

Otsego County Director of E-911 Communications Robert O’Brien said, “For the past six years, Otsego County has been working on the upgrade of their next generation radio system. A number of milestones have already been surpassed, and these grants from Senator Seward and Assemblyman Magee will help us reach the conclusion of this vital emergency communication project.”

Otsego County is in the midst of implementing a 12 site communications network. As part of the system upgrade all of the existing communications sites have been rebuilt and additional sites added to increase coverage. In addition, new primary and backup dispatch centers have also been developed.

Otsego County is now in the last stages of the site upgrades with three critical sites and associated public safety grade microwave connectivity remaining to be developed.

Once complete, the network will provide inter-county connectivity with adjacent counties and contribute to the New York State goal of creating interconnectivity throughout the state.

**“Our first responders risk their lives each time they answer an emergency call. Providing them with the tools they need to do their job is essential. Whether in the case of a natural disaster, a man-made tragedy, or other emergency situation, up to date communication equipment can mean the difference between life and death,”** Seward concluded.