



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

O'Mara announces aid for local public libraries: Grants also go to Southern Tier and Finger Lakes library systems

THOMAS F. O'MARA October 10, 2017

| ISSUE: **PUBLIC LIBRARIES**



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Elmira, N.Y., October 10—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats) today announced that the **Southern Tier Library System, Finger Lakes Library System** and individual public libraries in Chemung, Schuyler, Steuben, Tompkins and Yates counties have been awarded a total of \$134,500 in state aid through library grant funding O'Mara secured as part of the 2017-18 state

budget.

“A public library is a vital community resource and it's important for the state to continue investing in their strength and vitality. Fighting for our libraries is an investment in education, economic growth, and civic quality for parents and families, seniors, and the community at large. Our libraries play a fundamental role in local workforce development, career training, and job placement. They are cherished public institutions and we are fortunate throughout the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions to benefit from an outstanding network of public libraries providing access to books and so many other activities, learning materials, and civic, cultural, educational, and economic opportunities. I'm hopeful these grants will help local libraries better serve their communities and continue to address improvements in the face of difficult fiscal challenges,” said O'Mara, **who last year received the “Outstanding Advocate for Libraries Award” from the New York Library Association (NYLA).**

O'Mara noted that public libraries across New York State serve over 19 million patrons annually.

Throughout his tenure in the Legislature, O'Mara has been a strong supporter of Southern Tier and Finger Lakes public libraries, recognizing their central importance to the civic, cultural, and educational fabric of area communities. He has fought for increased state support for the Library Construction Grant Program. The 2017-18 state budget increased funding for the program by \$5 million to \$24 million, as well including \$95.6 million in state aid to public libraries.

O'Mara said that he secured a total of \$87,000 for libraries comprising the Southern Tier Library System and its member libraries, and a total of \$47,500 for the Finger Lakes Library System and the individual libraries he represents within the system. The following libraries have received state funding:

CHEMUNG COUNTY:

- > Steele Memorial Library, \$2,500;
- > Big Flats Library, \$2,500;
- > Mobile Library, \$2,500;
- > Horseheads Free Library, \$2,500;
- > Van Etten Library, \$2,500;
- > West Elmira Library, \$2,500.

SCHUYLER COUNTY:

- > Elizabeth B. Pert Reading Center, \$2,500;
- > Montour Falls Memorial Library, \$2,500;
- > Dutton S. Peterson Memorial Library, \$2,500;
- > Watkins Glen CSD Free Public Library, \$2,500.

STEUBEN COUNTY:

- > Southeast Steuben County Library, \$2,500;
- > Arkport Reading Center, \$5,000;
- > Addison Public Library, \$2,500;
- > EJ Cottrell Memorial Library, \$2,500;
- > Avoca Free Library, \$2,500;
- > Dormann Library, \$2,500;
- > Wimodaughsian Free Library, \$2,500;
- > Cohocton Public Library, \$2,500;
- > Greenwood Reading Center, \$2,500;
- > Fred and Harriet Taylor Memorial Library, \$2,500;
- > Howard Public Library, \$2,500;

- > Hornell Public Library, \$2,500;
- > Jasper Free Library, \$2,500;
- > Prattsburg Free Library, \$2,500;
- > Pulteney Free Library, \$2,500;
- > Savona Free Library, \$2,500;
- > Wayland Free Library, \$2,500.

TOMPKINS COUNTY (within the Finger Lakes Library System):

- > Tompkins County Public Library, \$2,500;
- > Ulysses Philomathic Library, \$3,000;
- > New Field Public Library, \$4,500.

YATES COUNTY:

- > Penn Yan Public Library, \$2,500;
- > Dundee Library, \$2,500;
- > Modest Bediente Memorial Library, \$2,500;
- > Middlesex Reading Center, \$2,500;
- > Mabel D. Blodgett Reading Center, \$2,500.

According to the **NYLA**, the Outstanding Advocate for Libraries Award presented to O'Mara "recognizes and honors an individual who, or a group that, has made a far reaching, sustained contribution to the promotion and/or support of library and information services to the people of New York State or residents within a designated service area within the State."

In 2015, O'Mara sponsored a new law (Chapter 480 of the Laws of 2015) that, for the first time, included "installation and infrastructure of broadband services" as a specific project category eligible to receive funding through the Library Construction Grant Program. Prior to the law's enactment, libraries were unable to access funding through the popular grant program

specifically for broadband purposes including cable, wiring and modems, and network terminals and access points.