



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

Senator Young Secures \$90,000 in Funding for Drug Interdiction in Cattaraugus and Allegany Counties

CATHARINE YOUNG October 25, 2017

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Little Valley, New York – As the heroin and opioid crisis continues to devastate families and communities around New York, Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I – 57th District) announced \$90,000 in funding for local law enforcement agencies to support drug interdiction efforts. Senator Young, joined by Cattaraugus County Sheriff Timothy Whitcomb, District Attorney Lori Rieman, and Allegany County Sheriff Rick Whitney, announced the news at a press conference today at the Cattaraugus County Office Building in Little Valley, New York.

“In my conversations with law enforcement officials these days, a word that I hear often is ‘unprecedented’. The heroin and opioid crisis has invaded our rural communities on a scale not seen in previous drug epidemics. In its wake, it has left a trail of heartbroken families, destroyed lives, and tragic, needless deaths,” said Senator Young. “Our law enforcement officers are on the front lines in this war and it is crucial they have the resources they need to investigate and arrest the dealers as well as help those in life-threatening overdose situations.”

Cattaraugus County’s share of the funding will support the work of two, part-time, undercover drug investigators who function as part of the Southern Tier Regional Drug Task Force. The Task Force brings together the New York State Police and local law enforcement agencies for regional drug investigations. A focus of the Task Force is to identify, arrest and prosecute high level dealers and secure maximum prison terms with the help of the federal Drug Enforcement Administration office in Buffalo and the U.S. Attorney’s office.

Sheriff Timothy Whitcomb said: “In my 27 years as a police officer, I have never seen a more dangerous threat to our community than the one we are facing right now. While our narcotics investigators are working to stem the tide of drugs on our streets by targeting dealers, our officers are balancing police work with paramedic skills as they respond with ever-increasing frequency to heroin and opioid overdoses. Among the facts that really underscore the widespread nature of this problem: our women’s ward at the county jail is routinely at its capacity of 25 – filled with young women, most who are mothers, who have been brought in on drug charges. This is a disturbing ‘first’ in my career and a reminder that we still have a long way to go.”

“Senator Young has been a critical partner in our efforts to combat this epidemic. We are grateful for this latest funding which will support two, part-time deputies working in collaboration with the Southern Tier Regional Drug Task Force which targets the high

volume dealers who are perpetrating this deadly crisis,” he added.

District Attorney Lori Rieman said: “As everyone knows, this epidemic is wide and far reaching and, unlike many drug epidemics in the past, no one is immune from its devastating grip. It affects rich as well as poor, young, as well as old. Beating opioid addiction requires more time and resources than the other drugs we have seen in the past. We are grateful for Senator Young’s grant and it is money well spent. Our drug officers work around the clock, sacrificing so much to eradicate drug abuse and addiction.”

Allegany County Sheriff Rick Whitney said their department anticipates using the funds for mobile digital terminals (MDT) in narcotics investigators’ cars - computers which allow officers to communicate directly with remote crime information databases. The funding will also support the cost of overtime for narcotics investigators and an infrared camera to help detect marijuana growing operations.

Sheriff Whitney said, “Allegany County continues to see a steady flow of narcotics, with heroin, suboxone and prescription drugs driving the majority of arrests. The biggest challenge is the fact that dealers within the underground drug scene are continually changing their product and operations in an attempt to ‘outsmart’ law enforcement. This requires our investigators to constantly shift their tactics to remain effective in this fight.”

“Senator Young’s commitment to this issue has been invaluable. She has been a staunch advocate on the legislative front and has fought tirelessly for funding to help local law enforcement deal with the situation on the ground. We are fortunate to have her on our side in this battle.”