



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

## National Comedy Center in Jamestown Celebrates Grand Opening

CATHARINE YOUNG August 1, 2018

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JAMESTOWN, NY – Calling it a turning point in the history of Jamestown, New York State Senator Catharine Young (R, C, I, 57<sup>th</sup> District) heralded the grand opening of the National Comedy Center, a \$50 million non-profit cultural and comedy complex that has been eight years in the making.

Senator Young joined federal, state and local officials and the center’s leadership to cut the ribbon for the new venue Wednesday morning, which received more than \$16 million in funding from New York State.

“The National Comedy Center is one of the most ambitious and imaginative cultural endeavors of our time. Designed to be immersive, experiential and individually-driven, this extraordinary venue will attract more than 100,000 people each year, and delight and amaze every one of them,” said Senator Young. “The end result has surpassed our expectations. The National Comedy Center is an economic catalyst for Jamestown and Chautauqua County that will transform the future of this region.”

Of the \$16.6 million in state funding that was invested in the project, \$4.7 million came from grant awards from the Western New York Regional Economic Development Council, \$6.7 million was proceeds from Empire State Development’s (ESD) allocation in New Market Tax Credits and \$5 million was from the Buffalo Billion II in 2017.

Senator Young helped ensure the Comedy Center received the full \$5 million allocation in 2017 by securing a line item detailing the full amount in the Senate’s budget proposal after it came to light that NCC’s proposed funding was lumped together with the entirety of projects in the Buffalo Billion II.

In August 2015, ground was broken for the project. Construction encompassed a new 6,000 square-foot building, renovation of the historic Jamestown Gateway train station, renovation of two historic buildings and an exterior film and video screening area adjacent to Comedy Park.

The first non-profit cultural institution and national-scale attraction dedicated to the art of comedy, the facility is built around three facets, including: an immersive exhibit experience, live performances and programming, and education and support of aspiring artists.

Comprised of more than 50 interactive exhibits designed by leading museum innovators, the 37,000 square-foot facility tells the story of comedy from its origins through the present,

celebrating the craft and its legendary talents.

Legendary comedian Lucille Ball provided the inspiration for the Comedy Center. A native of Jamestown, she had a vision for her hometown to become a destination for the celebration of comedy. Those efforts started more than two decades ago with the creation of the annual Lucille Ball Comedy Festival, which is marking its 27<sup>th</sup> year, and the Lucille Ball Desi Arnaz Museum which opened in 1996. The Comedy Center is the culmination of this vision.

“New York State has supported many wonderful cultural projects over the years, but this one truly stands apart in terms of its scope, innovation and location in Western New York,” said Senator Young. “My thanks go out to Governor Cuomo for his commitment to this project and the future of Jamestown, to the National Comedy Center’s visionary and tireless leaders, and to my fellow state and local officials for supporting, facilitating and assisting this project at every turn. This amazing effort is a triumph of confidence and collaboration and it has launched the start of a new era for our community. The future has never looked brighter.”