



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

## Local public libraries awarded state grants

THOMAS F. O'MARA August 21, 2018

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**Corning, N.Y., August 21**—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats) and Assemblyman Phil Palmesano (R,C,I-Corning) said today that public libraries throughout their legislative districts have been awarded state library construction grants.

The area legislators said the grants are awarded through New York's Library Construction Grant Program, which received \$24 million in the 2017-18 state budget to allocate this year's awards. In the 2018-19 state budget enacted earlier this year, the Legislature and Governor Andrew Cuomo increased funding for the program to \$34 million. These awards will be announced next year.

In a joint statement, O'Mara and Palmesano said, "A public library is a fundamental resource for area families, seniors, and countless other community residents. We are always hopeful that these grants will help local libraries better afford and address their renovation needs. Public libraries, especially in many rural, upstate communities and regions, are New York's leading digital literacy educators, just one of many vital community roles our libraries fulfill. This role is likely to expand in future years. These ongoing investments will help more and more of our public libraries stay ahead of the curve to continue meeting the increasing demand. It's an investment in education and economic growth."

According to the New York State Library, which administers the grants, surveys have estimated that the cost of public library construction and renovation needs statewide totals more than \$1.7 billion. More than 51% of the over 1,000 public library buildings across New York are over 60 years old. Another 33% are more than three decades old. Many of the state's local public libraries are unable to accommodate users with disabilities, and cannot provide Internet, computer, and other electronic technologies to users because of outdated and inadequate electrical wiring. They also do not have sufficient space to house the library's collection and lack sufficient space for public access computers.

The construction grants help libraries and library systems make renovations and upgrades, update electrical wiring to accommodate computer technology, renovate facilities to provide wheelchair accessible entrances and become fully accessible to persons with disabilities, and provide community meeting rooms.

O'Mara and Palmesano highlighted the following grants to area libraries:

- > Dutton S. Peterson Memorial Library (Schuyler County), \$9,466 to update electrical and plumbing services, and facilitate other interior renovations;
- > Southeast Steuben County Library (Steuben), \$170,275 to bring restrooms into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA);
- > Addison Public Library (Steuben), \$22,603 to install a new boiler/heating system, air conditioning, upgrade electric service, and a new roof;
- > Cohocton Public Library (Steuben), \$11,000 to replace existing single-pane windows with double-pane windows to increase energy efficiency;
- > Dormann Library (Steuben County), \$3,458 to upgrade the existing network and install newer technology;
- > Pulteney Free Library, \$202,094 for infrastructure and concrete work on the library's new building;
- > Wayland Free Library, \$37,080 to replace the HVAC system and lighting, install a security system, and other interior renovations;
- > Ulysses Philomathic Library (Tompkins), \$6,513 to replace existing with an LED lighting system; and
- > Dundee Library (Yates), \$7,085 to replace lighting.

In addition to the above awards, Palmesano's 132nd Assembly District also includes a portion of Seneca County and the following Seneca County libraries within Palmesano's district will

receive grants:

> Edith B. Ford Memorial Library, \$335,877 to undertake Phase 2 of a new library building including electrical, plumbing, HVAC, and millwork; and

> Lodi Whittier Library (Elizabeth Garnsey Delavan Library), \$53,598 to continue Phase 1 of the new library building including exterior site work, a parking lot, and a sidewalk.

In 2015, O'Mara and Palmesano 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.