

## **Empire State Development News**

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**FOR RELEASE: IMMEDIATE**

9/3/2009

## **EMPIRE STATE DEVELOPMENT AWARDS UTICA RESTORE NEW YORK GRANT FOR ITS GENESEE STREET CORRIDOR**

### **Seven additional projects across the Mohawk Valley will also receive funding for economic and community development**

Empire State Development today announced that the Genesee Street Corridor Improvement Project in Utica is the recipient of a \$2.1 million grant from the third round of Restore New York funding. Empire State Development is providing funding to 79 projects statewide through its Restore New York Communities Initiative. Restore New York was designed to revitalize urban areas and stabilize neighborhoods as a means to attract residents and businesses. The Mohawk Valley received almost \$12.5 million in funding for eight projects.

"The Restore New York program is critical to our economic development, smartly leveraging private investment with State dollars so that we provide our neighbors with the resources they need to grow," Governor David A. Paterson said. "With this third round of funding, our villages, towns and cities can move forward with renewal projects that create jobs and attract businesses and consumers."

The west side of Genesee Street in downtown Utica is located in the heart of the city's business district revitalization target area. The Genesee Street Corridor Improvement Project will assist three properties, each located along the 100 and 200 block of Genesee Street. Genesee Street is the Utica's "Main Street;" it runs through the heart of downtown and connects the Utica New York State Thruway exit in North Utica to the businesses and residential neighborhoods of South Utica.

The city proposes to rehabilitate three buildings that are each more than 50 percent vacant. The Winston Building will be rehabilitated to create three floors of professional office space and two floors of loft-style residential space. The building at 180 Genesee Street will be rehabilitated for future commercial space, while renovation of 170-172 Genesee Street will allow for the expansion of an existing software development company.

"Restoring the downtown core piece by piece is crucial to the vitality and future sustainability of Utica. Proof of that is evident just a few doors down with the newly renovated Stanley Theater, a cultural icon and anchor for this community, which was awarded a Restore New York grant last year," said Empire State Development Chairman & CEO designate Dennis M. Mullen. "Today's Restore New York Round III announcement demonstrates that continued efforts like the revitalization of the Genesee Corridor have the potential to reposition our State by spurring economic development, creating resilient communities that provide the foundations for future growth and the means to transform neighborhoods."

"We are pleased to be able to help the city of Utica as it continues to make significant strides in restoring downtown as a vibrant business and cultural center," said Empire State Development Regional Director Kenneth Tompkins. "The Restore New York funds awarded will further our mutual goal of attracting and retaining businesses, enhancing the quality of life for this community and positioning the Mohawk Valley for future prosperity."

"When I became mayor, I promised to change the direction of Utica by embarking on a renewed commitment to Downtown, a commitment forged by bringing our concerns right to Albany, and building real working relationships with State leaders," said City of Utica Mayor David R. Roefaro.

"Today, I report on a promise made, and a promise kept. I'll also acknowledge what so many of us already know—as goes Downtown, so goes our entire region. This Restore New York Grant makes real, for the first time, our Downtown loft apartment initiative through the funding of the Winston Building Project. This venture will redevelop a historic and architecturally significant landmark into state of the art retail and office space. But that's not all; this grant will also fund the restoration of a 19<sup>th</sup> century landmark building currently housing a longtime committed restaurant. Finally, the third recipient of this grant includes the Black River Systems expansion project. This high tech firm, in the heart of Downtown, is not only going to be adding more jobs, but more office space for the fast paced industry they serve. This announcement marks Downtown's proudest day, another footstep in our journey to the Renaissance."

"I commend the Governor for recognizing the needs of these specific parts of downtown Utica and Rome," said New York State Senator Joseph Griffo (47<sup>th</sup> District). "The Restore New York Communities Initiative is a vital tool for creating additional economic development opportunities throughout New York State by turning gutted buildings into new, productive facilities. These projects help foster an environment that encourages job creation and helps generate optimism among residents. I look forward to continuing to work with Mayor Roefaro, Mayor Brown and Chairman Mullen to further economic opportunity and growth in the future."

"The Restore New York initiative will boost the ongoing effort in Utica, Rome and many other communities to revitalize their downtowns and urban centers," said Assemblywoman RoAnn M. Destito (D/WF-Rome). "This program will allow the cities to renovate these historic buildings to become a centerpiece not only for future business and commercial projects, but also to help draw more people downtown through the development of modern loft-style apartments."

Restore New York funds municipally-sponsored projects for the demolition, deconstruction, rehabilitation or reconstruction of vacant or obsolete structures. Restore New York was designed as a competitive process with specific criteria, identifying those projects that would serve to revitalize urban cores, leverage private investment and bring future business expansion to New York State. Strong emphasis is placed on projects from economically distressed communities across the State with priority given to projects that leverage other state or federal redevelopment, remediation or planning programs such as Brownfield Opportunity Areas or Empire Zones.

In addition to the Genesee Street Corridor, other Mohawk Valley projects receiving Restore New York III funding are detailed below:

#### **City of Oneonta – Bresee Block Redevelopment Project**

Grant Total: \$2,200,000

The city of Oneonta proposes to comprehensively revitalize the heart of the downtown area by implementing the Bresee Block Redevelopment project. This project includes the demolition of over 50,000 square feet of vacant, dilapidated buildings; restoration of the vacant, historic Bresee's Building to 1906 vintage; rehabilitation of two adjacent mostly vacant mixed-use buildings; and development of supporting access and parking facilities. Project funding includes New York State City-by-City, New York State Capital Assistance Program and Community Development Block grants, city funds and in-kind services and private financing. The project will create 11,800 square feet of new retail and commercial space, 27 new housing units and parking for 75 cars. The project will also support the recently completed Water Street Revitalization and Clarion Hotel and Conference Center projects, as well as the Foothills Performing Arts Center scheduled for completion this summer.

#### **City of Gloversville – Estee School Condominium Project**

Grant Total: \$2,500,000

The Estee School, which was vacated by the Gloversville School District approximately twelve years ago, is a very prominent building at the north end of the downtown Main Street district in the city of Gloversville. The east wing of the school was rehabilitated into upscale apartments two years ago by the Crossroads Incubator Corporation, a subsidiary of the Fulton County Economic Development Corporation. The renovation has proven very successful with an occupancy rate of over 90 percent. The Restore New York funds allocated for the proposed project would rehabilitate the school's

remaining 46,312 square feet into 25 condominiums. The project would result in a multi-million dollar investment in downtown Gloversville, put a prominent semi-vacant building back into productive use, make a substantial contribution to the city's tax base and bring residents back into downtown.

#### **City of Johnstown – Collingwood Ave and North Perry Housing Project**

Grant Total: \$420,000

The city has demolished two old commercial and industrial buildings on a 1.1 acre 3 parcel site near Johnstown's city center. The plan is to transfer site ownership to a private developer who plans to construct three duplex townhouses. The six housing units, each of which will be approximately 1,355 square feet, will be constructed to conform to current market and neighborhood needs. Two of the duplex townhouses will be accessible via Collingwood Avenue and the third townhouse will be off of North Perry Street. This project fulfills the objectives and needs identified in the city's Comprehensive Plan and will leverage the city's Brownfield Opportunity Area program.

#### **Village of Cherry Valley – 29 Main Street Cherry Valley**

Grant Total: \$225,000

The project involves the renovation and restoration of the only vacant and abandoned mixed use building located on Main Street in the historic village of Cherry Valley. The building was erected circa 1856 and is approximately 6,400 square feet, including three floors and a basement. The goal is to restore the structure and lease it to businesses with local interests, thereby providing a much needed economic boost to the village. Commercial space will be developed on the first floor and the second floor will yield two low-income housing units, with parking facilities, to be earmarked for local residents. In addition, the third floor will be utilized as a seasonal rental for local events and vacation lodging. The exterior facade of the building will be restored in keeping with the surrounding architecture. Local businesses will be called upon to work on the project, and local contractors will be employed for project construction.

#### **Town of Richmondville – Maranatha Family Center**

Grant Total: \$2,314,600

The Maranatha Family Center project will demolish the vacant and unsafe barn space and rehabilitate a historic Dutch barn for future use. After demolition and rehabilitation, the reconstruction of a recreational/medical/fitness complex will commence. Upon completion, the center will include the currently existing Maranatha Physical Therapy and Maranatha Fit-for-Life Fitness Center, leasable office space, meeting rooms and a children's activity center. This multifaceted complex will provide a much-needed recreational venue for the region. Additionally, it will offer leased business space to complementary businesses, thus generating economic growth. The project is commensurate with several objectives in the Town of Richmondville Comprehensive Plan, as well as in the Schoharie Long Range Economic Development Strategy.

#### **City of Rome – From Brown to Green Rome BOA Implementation Strategy**

Grant Total: \$1,690,000

This catalyst project, identified in Rome's Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA), will rehabilitate three critical properties in Rome's downtown, bringing them from negative value to extremely marketable conditions. The Old City Hall building, located in the Bellamy-Gansevoort Historic District, will undergo exterior historic preservation, interior rehabilitation and LEED certification for future commercial use. The Grand Hotel will undergo gut rehabilitation and energy-star standardization to create modern residential and commercial space. The Nolan Building will undergo deconstruction, gut rehabilitation and reconstruction activities to provide flexible, energy-efficient commercial space. Supported by the city's comprehensive master plan, urban design plan, Main Street Development Assessment and the BOA nomination study, this Restore New York initiative will energize the local tax base, leverage private investment and position Rome for prosperity in the new economy.

#### **Village of Sharon Springs – The Imperial Spa by Sharon Springs, Inc.**

Grant Total: \$1,000,000

Jobs Created: 100 jobs

The project aims to rehabilitate the historic Imperial Bathhouse (circa 1927) into a modern luxury spa which will re-establish Sharon Springs as a spa destination. The village of Sharon Springs has a rich history as a health spa destination that can count former presidents and captains of industry as guests due to its unparalleled natural mineral waters. The rehabilitation will create 41,200 square feet of spa and therapy area and 6,400 square feet of outdoor bathing facilities. The total renovated square footage, including all amenities such as restaurants and gift shops, will be 50,000 square feet. In conjunction with numerous nearby tourist attractions in Schoharie and Otsego Counties, the Imperial Bathhouse expects 40,000 visitors annually. In addition, with its exclusive relationship with DongBu Tour and Travel, the largest Korean travel agency on the east coast, the Imperial will attract over 80,000 international visitors yearly. It is anticipated that, once complete, the project could lead to the creation of 100 new jobs.

*A complete list of the Restore New York Round III grant recipients throughout the state can be found here: [http://www.ny.gov/governor/press/pdf/press\\_0902091.pdf](http://www.ny.gov/governor/press/pdf/press_0902091.pdf).*

For more information regarding Restore New York, please visit [www.empire.state.ny.us/restoreNY/default.asp](http://www.empire.state.ny.us/restoreNY/default.asp). Empire State Development is New York's chief economic development agency. ESD also oversees the marketing of "I LOVE NY," the State's iconic tourism brand. For more information, visit [www.nylovesbiz.com](http://www.nylovesbiz.com).

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