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ESD AWARDS UPSTATE REGIONAL BLUEPRINT FUND GRANT TO TAUNY

*Grant to Traditional Arts in Upstate New York will help create a regional center
for folk arts and cultural programs in the North Country*

Empire State Development (ESD) and Traditional Arts in Upstate New York (TAUNY) today announced that TAUNY will receive a \$195,850 ESD Upstate Regional Blueprint Fund grant toward the renovations and improvements necessary to create The TAUNY Center, a regional destination for folk arts and cultural programs of the North Country Region, at 53 Main Street in Canton.

TAUNY is the only organization in New York's North Country—a 14-county region north of the Mohawk River from Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River to Lake Champlain, including the Adirondack Mountains—dedicated to showcasing the folk culture and living traditions of the region.

“It is critical that we integrate arts and culture into our economic development efforts,” said ESD Chairman & CEO Dennis M. Mullen. “The programs conducted by TAUNY leverage human capital and the North Country’s cultural resources to generate economic development, while creating a positive regional and community image. I’m pleased the ESD Upstate Regional Blueprint Fund will help restore and revitalize a historic building in Canton’s downtown district, which will now serve as a vibrant public space, as well as attract tourism and other business.”

Phase I renovations, which began in mid-October, include repairs to front and rear facades, electrical upgrades, construction of an elevator, an accessible entrance and restroom and cosmetic improvements to the main floor. The TAUNY Center and the North Country Folkstore will remain open for programs and business during renovations with a grand reopening planned for mid-February. Funds making the first phase possible have been raised with a combination of grants from state and public agencies, private foundations and contributions from individuals and businesses. Fundraising is continuing now so Phase II renovations can move forward.

“We’re thrilled to be awarded this generous grant from the ESD Upstate Regional Blueprint Fund,” said The TAUNY Center Project Director Varick Chittenden. “The TAUNY Center will be a leader in revitalizing both the economic and aesthetic value of Canton’s downtown business district. As an attraction for both North Country residents and visitors to the area, we hope to help bring retail and food businesses back to Main Street, making it an exciting and dynamic

place to be. The arts have been big contributors to the liveliness of other upstate villages and we'll do our best to reward the Blueprint Fund's commitment to our success."

With the announcement of the ESD Upstate Regional Blueprint Fund grant, TAUNY's current Evergreen Campaign has passed the million dollar mark, having secured about 82 percent of the \$1.25 million goal.

Campaign Co-Chairs Joseph and Dine Kennedy said: "We truly believe we are now in striking distance of our goal. We know there is broad community support for TAUNY and we challenge the people of the North Country to take us over the top."

The \$1.25 million goal will make completion of Phase II—renovations to create new program, archives and office space on the second floor and lower level—possible.

"The North Country has a distinct identity and TAUNY's work has increased the economic vitality of the region by exposing and promoting that identity," said ESD North Country Regional Director James Fayle. "The ESD Upstate Regional Blueprint Fund supports projects that help provide a framework for future growth in regions with stymied development. This project fits squarely with that endeavor by assisting with downtown redevelopment and furthering TAUNY's mission."

TAUNY is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping people understand and appreciate the folk traditions and local culture of everyday life—present and past—in the North Country. To do so, TAUNY seeks to research and preserve a record of diverse groups, customs and traditions; to recognize and empower traditional arts and artists; to identify and promote regional identity; and to provide opportunities for people of all ages to learn about folklore and local culture.

Empire State Development is New York's chief economic development agency and administrator of the statewide business resource portal New York First (www.NYfirst.NY.gov). ESD is committed to being recognized on a global scale as the economic development engine driving job growth, strategic investment and prosperity in New York State. ESD is intent on paving the way for New York State to become the leader of the innovation economy and one of the most business friendly, productive and competitive economic development climates in the world. ESD also oversees the marketing of "I LOVE NY," the State's iconic tourism brand. For more information on Empire State Development, visit www.esd.ny.gov.

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