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New York State Assemblyman Bill Conrad Announces \$65,000 in Grants for Improvements to the Buffalo & Erie County Public Libraries of the 140th District

The funding will be used to update furnishings, promote childhood literacy, and enhance patron comfort and security

BUFFALO – Today, August 5, 2021, New York State Assemblyman Bill Conrad announced that he has secured new State aid for all four branches of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Libraries located in his district.

The grants, totaling \$65,000, were awarded from Conrad’s 2021 allotment of State funding for non-profit educational institutions. Today’s announcement was delivered at the Elaine M. Panty Branch in Buffalo’s Riverside neighborhood, where Conrad was joined by board members and staff of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Libraries and Buffalo’s North District Councilman Joseph Golombek Jr., who represents Black Rock/Riverside.

The money will be distributed as follows:

The **City of Tonawanda Public Library** will receive \$20,000 to replace aging shelving and furnishings, creating more welcoming, comfortable and functional spaces in both the children’s and the adult areas of the library at 333 Main St. In addition, educational play elements will be integrated into the reading area of the children’s section. Funding will also support the national program, “Every Child Ready to Read,” which encourages the engagement of children through a combination of reading and play – a practice that has been shown to expand youngsters’ vocabulary.

The **Town of Tonawanda Public Libraries** will receive \$30,000 for improvements to the Kenilworth and Kenmore branches.

The Kenilworth Branch, located at 318 Montrose Ave., has plans to purchase updated mobile shelving units and an outdoor sign for the corner at Cambridge Avenue. The shelves will give the library the

capability to reconfigure its space based on community needs. The sign will enhance visibility and make it easier for the library to publicize its programs.

The Kenmore Branch, located at 160 Delaware Road, will purchase updated public seating that can be easily maintained. The goal is to modernize the library's furnishings and enhance patrons' comfort.

The **Elaine M. Panty Branch**, located at 820 Tonawanda St., Buffalo, will receive \$15,000 for the addition of exterior energy-efficient lighting for the perimeter of the library and parking lot, and for upgrades to its security camera system. These enhancements will provide patrons with better visibility and security, and to offer a community gathering place that is both inviting and safe.

Assemblyman Bill Conrad said, "Public libraries don't simply house books. They are extensions of the classroom and provide safe gathering places for people of all ages. Every day, the dedicated staff of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Libraries help us bridge the gap to greater knowledge, ensuring accessibility to information and technology that can empower and entertain, and ultimately enrich the lives of those living in our community. Libraries quickly adapted to our 'new normal' amid the pandemic, knowing that in a time of great upheaval and isolation, their services were as essential as ever. Now that their doors have reopened to the public, I was eager to help our libraries make the upgrades that in turn will help them continue to meet the changing needs of their communities."

Buffalo City Councilman Joseph Golombek Jr. said, "I would like to thank Assemblyman Conrad for his support of the Elaine M. Panty Branch. This library is used for traditional library uses, but also for the community to access the Internet for personal enrichment, and for community programs that assist residents of the Riverside and Black Rock communities."

Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Interim Director Jeannine Doyle said, "We are grateful for Assemblyman Conrad's demonstrated commitment to libraries and lifelong learning. The award to the Elaine M. Panty Branch Library will enhance our patrons' experience by ensuring a safe place for all those who visit! On behalf of all our libraries, we look forward to a bright future and continued partnership with Assemblyman Conrad as we work together to enrich library services for the communities we serve."

City of Tonawanda Public Library Director John Gaff said, "Community libraries provide vital services in lifelong education, employment, entertainment and beyond. The City of Tonawanda Public Library is grateful to Assemblyman Conrad for his efforts in securing funding to aid in providing those services. With this funding, the City of Tonawanda Public Library will work to improve our space and provide the community with a welcoming and inviting place for all to enjoy."

Town of Tonawanda Public Libraries Director Mary Muscarella said, "We are pleased to work with Assemblyman Conrad, who has been a longtime library supporter. We sincerely appreciate the proposed funding for the Town of Tonawanda Public Libraries, the Kenmore and Kenilworth Branches. It is our intention to use the funding at the Kenmore Branch for construction of quiet study rooms for patrons. This is something that is frequently requested, and we are happy to be able to meet the community need. At the Kenilworth Library, the funds will be utilized to update shelving and chairs, meaning improved access to library materials and a comfortable, welcoming space for the community."

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