



Gov. Cuomo details up to \$640,000 construction funding for firehouse

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Governor Andrew Cuomo has unveiled up to \$640,000 in state funding that will allow construction to move forward on the town's new firehouse, one year after the station was washed away.

The Keene Fire Station was destroyed on August 28, 2011 by hurricane Irene, and construction on a new building was scheduled to begin this August. However, town officials were informed recently that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) would not approve the funding necessary for the project to move forward. The action taken by the governor will close the funding gap and allow contracts to be signed, so area residents can come one step closer to the restoration of the critical fire, rescue and ambulance services provided by the station.

"New York State made a clear commitment to communities hit hard by hurricane Irene and tropical storm Lee, that we will be with you every step of the way as you rebuild and recover," governor Cuomo said. "Today's announcement will put in place the last missing piece of the funding to allow the Town of Keene to build a new firehouse and restore a vital piece of infrastructure that was destroyed by Hurricane Irene. Here in New York, when disaster strikes and help is needed, we come together as one and step up to the plate to do whatever it takes to rebuild stronger and better than ever before."

The total project cost is estimated at \$2.3 million. Insurance on the Fire Department covered \$635,000, town voters approved a \$500,000 public bond, and in December 2011, the town received a grant notification of \$680,000 from FEMA. However, FEMA recently reduced the committed grant, leaving the town without the necessary funding to begin the project.

The funding by the governor will cover the \$340,000 reduction by FEMA, and add an additional \$300,000 to reimburse the Keene Fire Department for the cost to acquire the new land where the firehouse will be built. The \$640,000 is funded through the NYS Office of Community Renewal.

The governor's actions come days before the original bids on construction of the new firehouse would have expired. Without the state's expedited action, the contracts would likely have had to go back out to re-bid, delaying the critical project's start by months if not longer. With the funding announced today, construction on the new firehouse is expected to be completed by next spring.

Senator Betty Little said, "The FEMA withdrawal was going to be a devastating blow to our recovery efforts but due to governor Cuomo's actions we are proceeding with the construction of the new Keene Fire Station as planned. This money will help communities across this region rebuild and recover better and stronger than before. The governor and his team have stepped up to the plate once again and I thank him for his dedication to this town and to the North Country."

Assembly member Teresa Sayward said, "Last year Hurricane Irene devastated many towns throughout the North Country. The governor has taken unprecedented steps to ensure that the communities destroyed by the storms receive the support from state government they need to

rebuild. His help is proof of his continued commitment to helping us revitalize our businesses and reconstruct our homes. I thank governor Cuomo and his administration for keeping his promise to the North Country and New York."

Randy Douglas, town supervisor of Jay and Essex County chairman of the board of supervisors said, "In the year since hurricane Irene swept through the Keene Valley and devastated communities in the North Country, governor Cuomo has been a true friend and tireless leader, taking unprecedented steps to ensure that our towns and villages received the support from state government they needed to rebuild."

"Governor Cuomo has also been an instrumental resource to our local government to assure that funding was available to re-build the Keene fire house, as well as many other public infrastructures. I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the governor and his administration for stepping up to the plate. Our Essex County residents will once again have a station in Keene that serves and protects them in a timely fashion because of his leadership," said Douglas.

Bill Ferebee, town supervisor, said, "Thanks to governor Cuomo, the state has once again stepped up-this time with a \$640,000 check-that will help us continue rebuilding our town after the destruction of hurricane Irene. A year ago, as flood waters swept through the streets, it seemed that hope was lost, but the governor and his team have been here on the ground to help us respond, clean up, and start to rebuild. And now he has come through again-providing us with the funds we desperately need to finish rebuilding our community and putting the shovels in the ground for our new firehouse."

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