

WASHINGTON, D.C. -

Congressman John W. Olver (D-1st District) announced that the U.S. House of Representatives has approved a funding bill that includes a total of \$1.5 million for three projects in Berkshire County.

Olver secured the funding in the FY10 Transportation and Housing (THUD) Appropriations Bill, which the House passed on July 23, 2009. Olver is chairman of THUD and worked to secure the funding. The Senate must still approve its appropriations bill and then both chambers will have to approve a reconciled bill before it goes to the president's desk to be signed into law. □

\$650,000 for Construction of BCC's Renewable Energy Resource Training Center

This funding will contribute toward BCC's conversion of the Pittsfield Campus' Ralph Hoffman Environmental Center (RHEC) into a Renewable Energy Resource Training Center. The Training Center will consist of two classrooms, four programmatically distinct laboratory configurations, a self-sustaining greenhouse, state-of-the-art computer hardware and software, and "green" technology instructional equipment.

"While we have seen jobs disappear in many industries over the past year, employment in green industries remains strong," Congressman John Olver said. "BCC is responding to the demand for specialists in green technologies and construction. The Training Center will be the only facility of its kind in the County, and will ensure that the area's workforce keeps up with the changing job market."

Since the early 1970's, BCC's Ralph Hoffmann Environmental Center (RHEC) has been home to classroom and laboratory facilities supporting the instructional needs of the Environmental Science program. Because of significant changes to technology over the years, the RHEC facility has not only become outdated, but the learning spaces cannot accommodate new teaching methods.

For additional information, please contact:

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\$350,000 for North Adams State Armory Building ADA Compliance

This funding will be used to perform construction work to make the historic State Army Building compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act to extend community usage.

Congressman John Olver said, "The Armory's size and location made it a logical choice for a community center. The City has already made quite a lot of progress on restoring and repairing the building, and its presence has been an excellent addition to the area. These renovations will ensure that everyone who wants to access the programs that take place there will be able to."

The State Armory Building on Ashland Street served as a National Guard facility for many years. Located in one of the city's busiest corridors, the City of North Adams acquired the property in January, 2007, with the intention that it would serve the community at large as a community center. The building was in a state of disrepair. With the use of State and Federal funds, the City has been able to stabilize the building and begin repair work on the roof, windows, exterior stairs, exterior façade, interior flooring and water damaged areas. Now, attention has turned to the interior of the building. Presently, the Armory is home to the North Adams Basketball League as well as other community programs. Future anticipated uses include after-school programs.

For additional information, please contact:

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\$500,000 for Downtown Pittsfield Streetscaping

This funding will contribute toward the third phase of a multi-phase streetscape project. The streetscaping work began at West Housatonic and South Street and has continued through Park Square to North Street to Columbus Avenue. This portion of the North Street corridor represents a section of the main core of the downtown business district. It also includes Union Street, home to the award winning Barrington Stage Company.

"The project will further revitalize downtown Pittsfield," Olver said. "It will boost the arts and culture elements of downtown, encourage new private investment in downtown, and make the environment friendlier for residents and tourists alike," Congressman John Olver said. "Berkshire County as a whole will benefit from downtown Pittsfield Streetscaping. Pittsfield

is the economic center of the county and the city's economy affects the regional economy.”

The work to be performed includes decorative paving, new ornamental streetlights, sidewalk reconstruction, public art and historical statues, plaques and planting upgrades. The goal of streetscaping is to make downtown Pittsfield more attractive and appealing to pedestrians, enhance the city's unique characteristics and improve the environment for residents, tourists and businesses.

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