

## **West Point hotel, Newburgh film-TV studio among grant winners**

By Daniel Axelrod

Times Herald-Record

Posted Dec 19, 2019 at 7:14 PM

Empire State Development, a state public-benefit corporation that disperses grants to stimulate the economy, announced \$65.8 million in grants for 105 projects across the mid-Hudson on Thursday. The state defines the region as Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Sullivan, Rockland, Ulster and Westchester counties.

The Thayer Flats at West Point hotel project, which received \$1.9 million, and the P.S. 6 Center for Film and Television in Newburgh were Orange County's biggest grant recipients, and among the largest regional winners.

"This grant is going to enable us to significantly change not only the landscape of Highland Falls but its economic viability," said Rick Minicozzi, the managing general partner behind the \$39 million, 79-room Highland Falls luxury hotel, currently before the town planning board. "It'll help in continuing to turn the community into a gem on the Hudson."

The \$3.1 million Public School 6 project, which has City of Newburgh approvals, won nearly \$1 million via two state grants. Plans call for transforming the long-closed former Liberty Street school into soundstages, gallery space, a film screening area, and a training center for film and TV crews.

"Newburgh is one of the prettiest cities on the Hudson River by far, and this (project) is going to bring in a lot of jobs and activity to an area that really needs it," said building owner and developer Thomas Burr Dodd.

Elsewhere in Newburgh, craft alcohol maker Graft Cider won \$264,000 to help build a production and distribution center, with a tasting room on Little Britain Road, part of developer Victor Cappelletti's ambitious plans to transform the former Powder Creek Mill complex.

Other significant local grants include:

- \$460,000 for the Storm King Art Center to commission artist Sarah Sze to create the “Fallen Sky” exhibition, a 36-foot-diameter spherical cavity, sheathed in mirrored stainless steel
- \$300,000 for Port Jervis to improve sidewalks and street lighting along Pike Street
- \$200,000 for Kolmar Laboratories to increase its production capabilities for lipstick, personal care and powder items in Port Jervis
- \$1,859,890 for the Town of Delaware in Sullivan County for moving a highway garage from a floodplain
- \$500,000 for WB Sweetners to repurpose a county-owned former BOCES building to establish operations in Monticello
- several big Kingston projects, including \$400,000 for consolidating county and city transit systems, while improving routes; \$1.6 million for city sewer improvement; and \$2.5 million for Dietz Stadium infrastructure upgrades
- \$475,700 for the Town of New Paltz to create buffered bike lanes and sidewalks on part of the Empire State Trail along Henry W. Dubois Drive
- \$750,000 for the Town of Wawarsing to rehab the Kerhonkson sewer system

Not every applicant was a big winner. Middletown did not receive a \$6 million grant to help build a downtown parking garage.

And the Hudson Sports Complex did not win nearly \$16 million toward an almost \$80 million multi-phase project to improve and add attractions to the sports training center at a former prison site in Warwick.

Middletown Mayor Joseph DeStefano said the city will move forward with the garage project, while reapplying for a state grant.

Hudson Sports co-owner Raluca Gold-Fuchs said the lack of grant funding would slow but not halt the project.

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