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Budget proposes aiding communities hit by prison closures

14 HOURS AGO • MAURY THOMPSON -- THOMPSON@POSTSTASR.COM

Redevelopment of the Mount McGregor Correctional Facility property could be in line for state funding.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo's budget proposal, released Tuesday, includes \$24 million to support economic development in communities where correctional facilities and juvenile justice facilities are closing.

Mount McGregor, a medium security prison in Wilton, Moreau and Corinth, is one of four prisons scheduled to close in July.

The proposed "Economic Transformation Program" would make funding available for public/private initiatives that would be planned in consultation with regional economic development councils, according to budget documents.

Details of how the money could be used and how it would be allocated were not available on Tuesday, area state legislators said.

It appears the funding would be for redevelopment projects on prison and detention center properties, said Sen. Elizabeth Little, R-Queensbury.

Any state funding for redevelopment will be welcome, said Moreau Supervisor Preston Jenkins, who will be meeting with Wilton Supervisor Art Johnson and Corinth Supervisor Richard Lucia on Wednesday to discuss reuse of the property.

The supervisors will make a recommendation to Empire State Development Corp., which is preparing a reuse plan for the 1,187-acre prison property.

Sen. Kathy Marchione, R-Halfmoon, said she is still committed to attempting to keep the prison open.

The governor's economic development budget proposal also includes a new "Global NY" initiative.

Plans to market products and services internationally and increase exports will be among the factors the state uses to review regional economic development plans that compete for state funding.

The greater Glens Falls area is positioned to do well on that front because local medical device companies already distribute and market their products worldwide, Little said.

The governor's initiative fits with an effort by U.S. Rep. Bill Owens, D-Plattsburgh, to expand cross-border commerce with Canada, said EDC Warren County President Edward Bartholomew.

“We know that more could be done in our area with trade with Canada,” he said.

Cuomo’s proposal includes \$25 million for a new tax credit for upstate manufacturers.

The corporate tax credit would be the equivalent of 20 percent of the company’s local property tax.

Glens Falls Mayor John “Jack” Diamond said the tax cuts will make it easier to retain local companies and recruit new ones.

“If we stay the course he is charting, we will see an expanding tax base,” Diamond said in a prepared statement.

Marchione said she is pleased the governor called for a “disparity study” to determine what percentage of state contracts are awarded to businesses owned by disabled veterans,

State Assemblyman Dan Stec said he is pleased the governor’s budget proposal focuses on tax relief and infrastructure, and includes \$12 million for repairing and refurbishing Whiteface Mountain Veterans Memorial Highway in Essex County.

Little said she is pleased the budget includes \$9.4 million for capital improvements at Olympic Regional Development Authority facilities.

She said possibly some of that funding could be used to address the Gore Mountain Ski Center triple chairlift, which is old and difficult to find replacement parts for.

The governor’s proposal includes \$5 million for a second round of “Market NY” competitive grants for regional tourism marketing initiatives.

Highlights of Gov. Cuomo’s \$137B 2014-15 budget

Highlights of New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo’s 2014-15 budget plan:

- Total proposal: \$137.2 billion.
- Total growth: 1.7 percent.
- A projected surplus of more than \$300 million in the current year, growing to \$2.7 billion by 2018.
- A 3.8 percent increase in aid for schools, to \$21.9 billion.
- A \$2 billion bond act that would bring broadband and computers to classrooms if approved by voters.
- An increase of 4.6 percent for federally and state funded Medicaid, to \$58.2 billion.
- Tax and assessment reductions that will provide property, business, and estate tax relief.
- A public campaign financing system based on New York City’s model with contributions of up to \$175 would be matched \$6 to \$1.
- A total of \$2.2 billion in spending over five years to fund both the after-school program and universal pre-kindergarten statewide.
- An end to standardized testing for students in kindergarten through 2nd grade.

- Establishing a panel to review the implementation of the statewide Common Core standards.
- Spending \$15 million to plan for a new College of Emergency Preparedness, Homeland Security and Cybersecurity.
- Scholarships totaling \$8 million at public colleges for the top 10 percent of high school graduates who pursue careers in science, technology, engineering or math and agree to work in New York for five years.
- Reforming and extending for 10 years the Brownfield Cleanup Program.
- Adding \$4 million would be added to the state's Environmental Protection Fund
- Seeking an additional \$486 million in federal funds to replace and repair about 100 flood-prone bridges.
- Seeking \$1.4 billion from the federal government to harden the state's power grid against extreme weather.
- Projects totaling \$147 million along coastlines and waterways to provide flood control and critical infrastructure.
- Start a multibillion dollar overhaul of New York's mass transportation systems and New York City's airports, including protecting them against severe weather.
- Include \$39 million for grants to encourage municipal consolidations and regional services and tax credits for residents of local governments that fully dissolve or consolidate.
- Hold public safety agency spending steady at \$4.7 billion.
- invest \$10 million in technology for state and local law enforcement agencies to share information.