



Assemblywoman Crystal D. Peoples-Stokes



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Welcome

Dear Friends and Neighbors,
Summer is here! Festival season is in full gear, I hope everyone is staying safe, having fun, and enjoying this fantastic weather.

It's time for my post-legislative session newsletter. I'm proud to report to you on the progress I've been making as a community servant and the New York State Assembly Majority Leader. The last 12 months has been extremely trying for everyone, but it hasn't been without its bright spots. When things get hard, we band together; just another reason why we're called the City of Good Neighbors.

I look forward to continuing to hear from and working with you, my constituents, and community stakeholders to help me fight to improve the quality of life for the people of Buffalo, Western New York, and the entire State.

Wills & Estates Workshop

For residents interested in obtaining a free will, Majority Leader Peoples-Stokes is hosting a Wills Planning Orientation at Schiller Park Senior Center, located at 2057 Genesee St. at 9am on Saturday, August 19th. After the discussion, there will be time for Q&A and to pre-register for the wills clinic.

The 2023 Wills Workshop will also take place at Schiller Park Senior Community Center, located at 2057 Genesee St. "Intake," is when residents initially meet with lawyers, is scheduled for 10am on Saturday, Sept 9th. Participants must pre-register by calling 716-897-9714. If residents meet the various income guidelines, those registered will be able to complete a simple will for free; and if desired, assign a power of attorney and healthcare proxy. The Wills & Estate Workshop is made possible through our legal partners including Center for Elder Law & Justice, WNY Law Center, and Neighborhood Legal Services.

Upcoming Events

Movie Night at MLK Park:

- MLK Park on Fillmore Avenue Near the Greenhouse
- Activities for the kids start at 5 pm
- Movie showing at 6:30 pm
- DC League of Super Pets - Wednesday, August 2nd

Movie Night at North Park Theatre:

- North Park Theatre
1428 Hertel Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14216
- Movie showing at 6:30 pm
- Super Mario Bros. - Wednesday, August 16th

Movie Night at William Emslie YMCA:

- William Emslie YMCA, 585 William Street, rain location is indoors
- Activities for the kids start at 5:30 pm
- Movie showing at 6:30 pm
- Encanto - Wednesday, August 30th

2023 MOVIE NIGHTS
HOSTED BY
Majority Leader
Crystal Peoples-Stokes

ALL EVENTS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC!

For more information on this or any other community concern, please contact the Office of Majority Leader Crystal Peoples-Stokes at 716-897-9714.



May 2023 - Hope Knight, President & CEO of Empire State Development announces \$962,000 in new media equipment for the Apollo Media Center to support job training, youth programming and media production.



June 2023 - Hope Knight, President & CEO of Empire State Development and Valerie White, Senior Executive Director of LISC NY announce the availability of Eastside small business grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$50,000 at the Beverly Gray Business Exchange Center.

Red Tails Traveling Exhibit

The Buffalo Board of Education, in conjunction with the African American Veterans Monument Committee, Inc. have successfully secured the Red Tails "CAF Rise Above" Traveling Exhibit for August 29th – September 24th. The exhibit will split its time between the Buffalo & Erie County Military & Naval Park near the waterfront, and at Signature Flight located at 50 N. Airport Dr. near the Buffalo Niagara International Airport.

The tractor trailer exhibit includes the showing of two short films on the history and legacy of the famous Tuskegee Airmen of the CAF Red Tail Squadron and CAF Rise Above: WASP (Women Airforce Service Pilots), the first women to trailblaze a path of flying American military aircrafts during WWII. Both short films tell of the internal trials and tribulations both squadrons endured to fight on behalf of their country. The true stars of the exhibit are the planes: a P-51C Mustang that the CAF Tuskegee Airmen flew and an AT-6 Texan "Nella" flown by the CAF WASP Squadron.

The free exhibit will be open to Buffalo Public School students in grades 4-7 for field trips and will also be open to the general public.

Cultural Corner



AAVM Update

On Saturday, September 24, 2022 the African American Veterans Monument hosted its official dedication and unveiling ceremony. Watts Architect & Engineering served as the Construction Manager with Mark Cerrone, Inc. as the General Contractor. The monument was designed by the late artist Jonathan Casey of Solid716.

The AAVM Committee successfully raised over \$2.4 million to build the monument, including \$327,000 thus far directly from the sale of

commemorative bricks. A special thank you to all who have supported this effort plus corporate sponsors: Niagara River Greenway Commission; Erie County Greenway Standing Committee, former State Senator Chris Jacobs, M&T Bank, Delaware North, HSBC, Pegula Sports & Entertainment, Catholic Health Systems, J.R. Oishei Foundation, Uniland Development Family/Carl & Carol Montante Charitable Fund, City of Buffalo (Mayor Byron Brown and Council President/Ellicott District Councilmember Darius Pridgen), County of Erie (County Executive Mark Poloncarz and Chairwoman April Baskin), KeyBank, Northwest Charitable Foundation, Douglas Development, Altria, ECMC, Independent Health, WNY UAW Region 9 and more.

WNY Women Making History Committee

The Smithsonian Institution is the world's largest museum, education, and research complex. Every Smithsonian site is free and open to the public, and their engaging digital collections provide an opportunity for everyone to access our nation's collective stories and history.

In 2016, the groundbreaking and powerful National Museum of African American Culture and History (NMAACH) opened to the public, quickly becoming one of the Smithsonian's most popular sites.

The Smithsonian is continuing to explore our rich, complex national identity. In 2020, Congress asked the Smithsonian to establish two new museums: The National Museum of the American Latino and the American Women's History Museum. US Senator Chuck Schumer appointed Majority Leader Crystal Peoples-Stokes to the national advisory board of the Smithsonian American Women's History Museum (SAWHM).

Peoples-Stokes is working hard to bring this museum to life, and she's doing so by engaging the WNY Community. She created the WNY Women Making History Committee in December to create awareness and build enthusiasm for the SAWHM. The committee is co-chaired by Majority Leader Crystal Peoples-Stokes and Innovation philanthropist and strategist Alice Jacobs.

In January, the WNY Women Making History Committee held the nation's first regional event celebrating the new museum. More than 300 women turned out to learn more and express their support for the nation's newest Smithsonian. Ambassadors for the new museum traveled to Buffalo from Washington, DC for this event and the Majority Leader took the opportunity to show off our region with a tour of the Michigan Street African American Heritage Corridor.



Members include Michele Agosto, Monica Angle, Odie Brant Porter, Sheila Brown, Alma Carrillo, Cynthia Ciminelli, Brigid Doherty, Phylcia Dove, Claudine Ewing, Jane Griffin, Jillian Hanesworth, Dr. Candace Johnson, Eunice A. Lewin, Ekuia Mends-Aidoo, Clotilde Perez-Bode Dedecker, Crystal Rodriguez-Dabney, Catherine Roberts, Dr. Barbara Seals Nevergold, Lillie Wiley-Upshaw, Marisa Wigglesworth, and Leslie Zemsky.



Majority Leader and other dignitaries celebrate the grand re-opening of the Albright Knox Gundlach (AKG) Art Museum on June 12, 2023. The project cost \$230 million, with the Assembly Majority contributing over \$9 million. The AKG now has a free and accessible Ralph Wilson Indoor Town Square with the popular Common Sky permanent art installation.



Assembly Majority members announce \$1.2 million in operational funds for Shea's Theater as part of 'Alive Downtown' \$5 million in statewide funding for historical theaters recovering from COVID. These are the first operational state funds that Shea's has ever received.

The Latest on ROCC

On March 17th, US Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg traveled to Buffalo to announce \$55 million in federal funds for the ROCC project. This is the largest "Reconnecting Communities" grant of the 45 dispensed around the country in 2023 to address mostly Black and Brown communities harmed by the placement of federally funded highways in the 1950s and 60s. The money came out of the \$1.2 trillion infrastructure bill championed by President Biden that Congress passed in 2021. The \$55 million announcement comes after securing up to \$1 billion in state transportation funding for construction.



On Juneteenth, July 19th, Senator Kennedy, County Legislator Howard Johnson and I alongside ROCC (Restore Our Community Coalition), were joined by NYS DOT Commissioner Marie Therese Dominguez to hold a press conference announcing the expansion of the project to now include infrastructure improvements in the surrounding neighborhoods immediately next to the expressway. A public open house was held the next day on June 20th to allow residents and interested parties to learn more about the project. There is now a Community Outreach Office located at 878 Humboldt Pkwy. that can be reached at 716-370-0071 and Kensingtoncommunityoutreach@dot.ny.gov. Office hours are Tues – Fri, 9:30am – 6:30pm and Sat, 10am – 2pm. For more information, please visit: <https://kensingtonexpressway.dot.ny.gov/>.

CFA Projects Recently Funded

The following is a list of local projects funded on the Eastside of Buffalo and throughout the 141st Assembly District.

APPLICANT	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	AWARD
Gerard Place Housing Development Fund Company Inc.	Gerard Place will complete capital improvements on its 100-year old Education Building. The renovated building will house a variety of workforce development programs, offered by community training partners, bringing living-wage jobs to a minimum of 100 Bailey-Delavan residents annually. The Education Building will also host a community dental health clinic and a community mental health clinic.	\$589,000
BestSelf Behavioral Health Inc.	BestSelf Behavioral Health, the largest community behavioral health provider in WNY, will renovate 899 Main Street on the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus. The centrally located facility will allow the Child Advocacy Center at BestSelf to relocate and expand, enabling it to provide services to all children in the area. The facility will also house a community training center that will help with workforce development efforts.	\$2,000,000
Explore and More Children's Museum	Explore & More will enhance and modify the footprint of all four floors of the children's museum, improving building accessibility and increasing guest safety. It will ensure the sustainability and outgrowth of a long lifespan of the museum and its mission to provide best-in-class PLAY experiences where all children, families and the community can explore, learn, and develop together.	\$384,704
Buffalo Urban Development Corporation	The Buffalo Urban Development Corporation intends to complete a BOA Plan for an area on Buffalo's east side for the Northland Corridor Beltline. The area includes sections of the Delavan Grider, Lovejoy and Fillmore District neighborhoods, with a mix of industrial, commercial and residential uses including various brownfield sites. The objective is to create opportunities for new and existing businesses, increase workforce training, incorporate green infrastructure, and create affordable housing.	\$87,750
Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences	Buffalo Museum of Science will use the tourism grant to fund a portion of the renovations to the museums core exhibits into a hands-on learning gallery focused on the "Science of Sport". The new dynamic Science of Sport exhibit will stand a tremendous educational, entertainment, and quality-of-life resource for our region and significant draw for tourism.	\$200,000
Visit Buffalo Niagara	Visit Buffalo Niagara will launch an integrated marketing campaign focused on key feeder markets to spur a more robust, equitable and accelerated recovery for Buffalo's music sector, to inspire tourism and create jobs inclusively, across all communities and demographics.	\$200,000
City of Buffalo	The City of Buffalo will revitalize Roosevelt Park in the Kenwood neighborhood. The site will be further developed to include a modern playground, fitness equipment, a running track, and walking path. The existing athletic courts will be replaced, the grass field will be refurbished, and several amenities will be installed with landscaping improvements.	\$750,000

Capital Projects Funded

Below is a list of capital projects my office helped secure funds for through the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York (DASNY):

GRANTEE	PROJECT	AWARD AMOUNT
Buffalo & Erie County Military & Naval Park	USS The Sullivans	\$500,000
City of Buffalo – Shoshone Indoor Sports Facility	Construction	\$500,000
Jericho Road	Construction	\$500,000
North Buffalo Ice Rink	Roof replacement	\$350,000
Juneteenth Festival of Buffalo, Inc.	Façade, exterior masonry work	\$300,000
Back to Basics Outreach Ministries, Inc.	Construction	\$225,000
Westminster Economic Development Initiative	Construction	\$225,000
City of Buffalo – Roosevelt Park	Park improvements	\$200,000
Buffalo Urban League	HVAC replacement	\$150,000
Pucho, Inc.	Expansion	\$150,000

NYS Council of the Arts Capital Projects Funded

GRANTEE	PROJECT TITLE	GRANT AWARD
Buffalo Media Resources	Lighting, Sound, Projection, and Seating System, Installation and Equipment Storage Facility Construction	\$50,000
Center for Exploratory and Perceptual Arts, Inc.	Education Center Photographic Equipment	\$25,000
Shea's O'Connell Preservation Guild Ltd.	Building Expansion	\$5,000,000
	TOTAL ALL GRANTS:	\$5,175,000

Multi-Modal Funding

The Multi-Modal Program provides reimbursement funding for five (5) specifically authorized transportation capital project "modes" found in State Transportation Law 14-k and NYSDOT Program Policy. Eligible modes include certain Rail, Port, Fixed Ferry Facility, Airport, and State and Local Highway and Bridge projects. Here are the most recent projects my office helped secure funds for:

GRANTEE	AWARD AMOUNT
City of Buffalo – Street Pavings: Rich St., Guilford St., Sweeney St.	\$165,000

Unclaimed Funds

ZIP	NUMBER ACCOUNTS	TOTAL AMOUNT
14202	5,822	\$6,386,571.96
14203	3,985	\$4,638,605.17
14204	4,921	\$2,294,692.75
14206	7,273	\$3,758,436.25
14208	5,164	\$2,510,138.31
14209	5,361	\$4,166,133.37
14212	5,245	\$3,378,320.46
14214	9,337	\$4,677,257.87
14215	14,977	\$7,781,946.99
	Total	\$39,592,103.13

In coordination with State Comptroller Tom DiNapoli, my office has identified over \$39.5 million in NYS Unclaimed Funds available to residents of the 141st Assembly District. New York State currently has \$17.5 BILLION in unclaimed funds. Unclaimed funds can be funds that have been collected as refunds, overpayments, security deposits or checks that were never cashed due to being lost, the payee moving, or death. Most unclaimed funds are associated with utilities, estates, insurance companies, courts, bank accounts and more. Almost 70% of claims are less than \$100; most claims can be submitted online (www.osc.state.ny.us/unclaimed-funds). There is never a fee to reclaim funds. Beware of phishing scams where you are asked to pay a fee to receive your unclaimed money.

Legislative Lane



Bills that have already been chaptered and have become law this year:

- **A614** – Clarifies that registration in the Donate Life registry takes effect when entry of the individual's enrollment data is made into the registry. Chapter 10 of the Laws of 2023.
- **A989** – Strengthens the integrity of the Minority- and Women-owned Business Enterprise program by rooting out fraud and providing more information to applicants and the public. Chapter 40 of the Laws of 2023.
- **A1246** – Provides the city of Buffalo flexibility in its marketing and issuance of serial bonds or notes. Chapter 176 of the Laws of 2023.
- **A1250** – Provides Erie County flexibility in its marketing and issuance of serial bonds or notes. Chapter 172 of the Laws of 2023.
- **A6629** – Extends for two years Erie County's sales and compensating use tax authorization. Chapter 175 of the Laws of 2023.
- **A7430** – Extends certain authorizations of conditional adult-use cannabis cultivators and conditional adult-use cannabis processors to minimally process and distribute cannabis products until June 1, 2024. Chapter 135 of the Laws of 2023.

Tennessee State Representative Justin Pearson visits Albany on May 23rd. Pearson protested for gun law reforms after a mass shooting at a Nashville elementary school. Pearson would be expelled from the state legislature but was soon reinstated.



Bills that passed the Assembly and Senate and are awaiting delivery to Governor Hochul:

- **A514A** – Improves educational outcomes and equity by providing notification to parents and students on available advanced courses at schools and informs them of benefits and opportunities offered in relation to advanced courses.
- **A782** – Authorizes the establishment of collaborative programs to address disparities in health care access or treatment, and/or conditions of higher prevalence in certain populations.
- **A2137** – Increases the total amount of bonds the Buffalo Sewer Authority may issue.
- **A4187** – Establishes a new State agency called the Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice to address inequality and institutional biases.
- **A4189** – Allows individuals who are not certified public accountants to hold a minority stake ownership in public accountancy firms.
- **A4618B** – Makes a technical correction to the law related to resentencing of certain marijuana related convictions.
- **A4868** – Provides for corporate franchise tax and personal income tax checkoffs for taxpayer gifts for diabetes research and education and establishes the Diabetes Fund.
- **A7388** – Authorizes the Office of Cannabis Management to share information obtained from applicants and licensees, upon their consent, with financial institutions for the purpose of consideration and compliance.

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Assemblywoman
**Crystal D.
Peoples-Stokes**

Community News

Summer 2023

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Development Drive



BMHA's Commodore Perry Complex

The Perry Projects will soon look very different. After 20 years of being completely empty, Pennrose, Inc., a national development partner, is working with BMHA to demolish all 24 low rise buildings containing 330 apartments beginning Fall 2023. In Phase I, 405 new affordable and mixed-income apartments will be built. 284 units will be designated for people on a waiting list for Section 8 project-based housing vouchers. Pennrose and BMHA have held community meetings over the last 2 years to gather resident input and answer questions. While the new units will be affordable, they will not be public housing. Additional build phases will total at least 700 apartments, including street level retail and the renovation of the Perry towers specifically for seniors. The planned development is anticipated to cost \$200 million.