

New Bridge earmarked for \$100G

Historic projects to get state funds

BY STEVE KELMAN
Staff Writer

The state has earmarked \$100,000 from its fiscal year 2007 for historic preservation projects at the New Bridge Landing Park.

State Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Lisa Jackson visited the historic site last week where she joined State Sen. Loretta Weinberg, along with a group of other state, county, local officials and New Bridge Landing Park Commission officials, to announce the funding.

The \$100,000 is part of the overall \$9 million state appropriation for historic preservation projects throughout New Jersey.

The local money will pay for a historical assessment of the Steuben House, provide an archaeological survey of the area and provide a landscaping plan for the 18-acre site that located in New Milford, River Edge, Hackensack, and Teaneck.

"This work will guarantee that places such as New Bridge Landing Park and the Steuben House, and all that they represent do not fade into history," Jackson said, "but remain a vibrant reminder of the struggle to establish our nation."



M.L. LIONETTI/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

State Sen. Loretta Weinberg discusses a \$100,000 appropriation from the state's 2007 fiscal year budget for Historic New Bridge Landing at a news conference in front of the Steuben House in River Edge last week.

Speaking in front of the Steuben House, she said she was thrilled to be there "with the people who have had the vision to keep this area open space."

"Historic sites are part of our culture and who we are as New Jerseyans," she said.

Jackson told the group that the New Bridge Landing Park is "yet another example" of Gov. Jon Corzine's "commitment to open space in the developed areas."

The commissioner then said

that the \$100,000 allocation was really "not much," but simply "the next step in a long process."

Jackson also urged approval of a question on yesterday's ballot that would free up money from the state's Corporate Business Tax Fund to address a backlog of more than a quarter-million dollars for maintenance and capital improvement projects at wildlife areas, historic sites and state parks.

"This is not a new tax," she said, "just a rededication of monies."

The commissioner explained that, if approved, the measure would provide \$15 million a year for capital improvement and maintenance projects for 10 years, jumping to \$32 million in 2016.

Weinberg told the gathering that the announcement of the \$100,000 funding was "a very exciting occasion for all of us who have worked so hard to preserve this wonderful jewel sitting in the middle of Bergen County."

The senator also said that the historic site has the potential to "really become an economic engine for this county" in the way of tourist dollars from visitors.

Commenting on the weather, as well as the funding from the state, River Edge Mayor Peg Watkins said, "What great sunshine... and we are getting money."

"Its phenomenal," she said.

Assemblyman Gordon Johnson called the state funding "a victory for the people of Bergen County and a victory for the people of the state."

"With the funds that are forthcoming," he said, "this site will become a beautiful gem for the people of Bergen County and the state."

Assemblywoman Valerie Vanieri Huttel also urged support of the ballot question so that "we can preserve a little piece of history in this part of New Jersey."

Assemblywoman Charlotte Vandervalk said that both she and Weinberg "were involved in the legislation that created the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission."

"This historic site is truly a gem," she said, "and I get disturbed every time I see documentation of New

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M.L. LIONETTI/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Robert Griffin, chairman of the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission, addresses the gathering at the Nov. 2 news conference where \$100,000 in state funding for projects at the historic site was announced.

NEW BRIDGE

FROM PAGE 2

Jersey historic sites, and this parcel gets skipped over."

"All of us need to do more to let people know what an opportunity we have here to make this place something special," she said.

Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commissioner Robert Griffin said he was pleased that the historic site is now on the state's radar screen.

"As one of the newly designated state urban parks, we are very pleased and proud to receive this further commitment to establishing Historic New Bridge Landing as a premier historic site in Bergen County," he said.

Griffin cited a number of accomplishments that have been made in recent years.

"We have raised over \$2 million in funding, purchased four vital pieces of property (including the Bergenfield Auto Parts junkyard), made repairs to the Steuben House and the swing bridge," he said.

"This is historic preservation at

its best," he said, "yet we are a long way from where we would like to be."

After many years of on-again, off-again negotiations the 1.3-acre junkyard property was acquired by the state in December 2005.

Preservationists are working toward the eventual construction of a museum, visitor center and Revolutionary War Memorial.

The Steuben House, originally known as the Zabriskie House, served as the headquarters for Gen. George Washington in September 1780.

But that was not his first visit to the area. In November 1776, after abandoning Fort Lee, Washington and the Continental Army crossed a wooden bridge over the Hackensack River — passing in front of the Steuben House — as British forces pursued them.

Their escape enabled this "rag-tag" army the chance to fight another day.

One month later, the Continental Army turned its retreat into victory at Trenton.

The Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission was created

by an act of the New Jersey Legislature in 1995.

New Milford Mayor Frank DeBari said he was proud that his borough is associated with the historic site.

"Mayor Peg Watkins and I are like the parents of a new state park," he said. "We can embrace this site and advertise it, so that people can come here and get a real sense of history."

DeBari, who is also Bergen County parks director, said that Historic New Bridge Landing is "truly a mini-Williamsburg here in Bergen County."

New Milford Councilman Michael Putrino said that he "applauded" the state's efforts to make people aware of the historic significance of the area.

"I'm proud that New Milford is connected with this project," he said.

Historic New Bridge Landing consists of the Steuben House, the Campbell-Christie House, the Demarest House and an 1889 swing bridge.

BERGENFIELD

Camp Merritt program set at library

"Camp Merritt Remembered," a DVD made and donated to the Bergenfield Public Library by William Zimmer of Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 3286 in Cresskill will be shown 10:30 a.m. Tuesday, Nov. 14 at the library.

In memory of the soldiers who gave their lives for their country while on duty in Camp Merritt, a

except for the inscriptions of people who gave their lives while on duty at Camp Merritt.

When the monument was dedicated on May 30, 1924, people began to assemble early in the morning before the officials arrived.

Gen. John J. Pershing and his staff were greeted with a salvo of

ing the memory of Camp Merritt, he also honored the name of Gen. Wesley Merritt who, in 1886 as superintendent of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, presented the bars of a second lieutenant bars to a cadet graduate — named John J. Pershing.

The Nov. 14 program is free and open to the public 18 and over

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ACROSS

- 1 Palindromic pal
- 4 Portuguese colony until 1999
- 9 "I'm expecting your idea to be very impressive"
- 14 "Take your pick"
- 15 Guilty ___ counts
- 16 One way to think
- 17 Poem by 61-Across that reads "When I remember bygone days / I think how evening follows mom / So many I loved were not yet dead / So many I love were not yet born"
- 19 Mails
- 20 "American Beauty" actress Suvari
- 21 "Tosca" number
- 23 Poem by 61-Across that reads "To keep your marriage brimming / With love in the loving cup / Whenever you're wrong, admit it / Whenever you're right, shut up"
- 31 Hitchcock's direction, briefly?
- 32 Stroke's need
- 33 People with licenses
- 34 Part of a moving story?
- 36 3:00
- 37 Poem by 61-Across that reads "One would be in less danger / From the wiles of the stranger / If one's own kin and kith / Were more fun to be with"
- 41 Crier's sigh
- 43 Shel Silverstein bestseller "___ Babbit"
- 44 Country where