



Governor's Office of
Storm Recovery

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Governor's Office of Storm Recovery Announces Completion of \$3 Million Emergency Shelter in the Ulster County Village of Ellenville

Ellenville, N.Y. - The Governor's Office of Storm Recovery (GOSR) today announced the completion of a \$3 million emergency shelter at the historic Hunt Memorial Building. GOSR Chief Strategy and Program Officer Paul Onyx Lozito and Ellenville Mayor Jeff Kaplan gathered with Deputy Ulster County Executive Marc Rider, Deputy Wawarsing Town Supervisor Cassie Spoor, and other officials at the village's annual Blueberry Festival to cut the ribbon on this new project that will improve the village's ability to prepare for and respond to emergencies.

GOSR Executive Director Katie Brennan said, "From major hurricanes to extreme heat, the intensity and unpredictability of major weather events necessitates that every community can provide a stable, safe, and sustainable shelter. The new facility in Ellenville is another example of how GOSR's grassroots, community-driven process is building resilient communities that are better prepared for emergencies and to keep their residents safe when it matters most."

Ellenville Mayor Jeff Kaplan said, "We are pleased that our community is now more resilient and better able to respond during disasters due to this new emergency shelter. We thank the Governor's Office of Storm Recovery for your ongoing partnership."

During Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee in 2011, Ellenville lost primary power. Residents evacuated their homes due to extensive flooding and the power outages that lasted for weeks. It became clear that the village did not have an emergency shelter that could adequately house residents who were forced to evacuate their homes, particularly a shelter appropriate to their abilities and medical considerations.

Through this project, the lower floor of the building was transformed into a safe sheltering space for Ellenville residents with a new emergency generator to supply electricity during power outages and important retrofits such as new windows, asbestos abatement, updated electrical service, commercial-grade kitchen, new flooring, and a new heating and air conditioning system. It also included several ADA-compliant measures like a wheelchair ramp and lift. In addition to serving as a shelter during emergencies, the building will also serve as a cooling center during extreme heat. The upper floors of the Hunt Memorial Building, which were renovated in 2016 as [a separate project](#), remain available as community meeting spaces.

The project included a needs assessment and identification of an appropriate space for a shelter. The Hunt Memorial Building was chosen for its location inside the village's core and outside the floodplain. Designs for renovation were made in collaboration with the State Historic Preservation Office to

preserve the historic character of the exterior of the century-old building, which is listed on both the National and State Historic registers.

This is GOSR's third resiliency project in the Ellenville community. In 2019, the agency completed a project to install backup power generators at Ellenville's emergency operations center in Village Hall, at its water treatment station, and at a local radio station that broadcasts during emergencies. Last year, the agency completed stream bank rehabilitation and resiliency measures along the Beer Kill and Sandburg Creek.

Assemblymember Brian Miller said, "I am pleased to see the completion of the emergency shelter project in the Hunt Memorial Building in Ellenville. The Hunt building is over 100 years old, and it is nice to see the role of emergency shelter being added to its rich history. I can appreciate the importance of this shelter facility that can assist more than 30 residents during emergencies."

Ulster County Executive Patrick Ryan said, "I want to thank the Governor's Office of Storm Recovery for their ongoing commitment to guarding our Ellenville community against the worst effects of extreme weather events. This community saw first-hand the need for emergency shelter during Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee in 2011 when Ellenville lost power for weeks and residents were evacuated from their homes in order to keep them safe from extensive flooding. Ellenville needed an emergency shelter inside the village's core, but outside the floodplain, that could adequately provide safety for all residents, taking into account accessibility and medical considerations, during a crisis, and now we have one. Thank you to the Governor, her team, Mayor Jeff Kaplan and everyone involved in seeing this come to fruition."

About GOSR

Established in June 2013, GOSR coordinates statewide recovery efforts for Superstorm Sandy, Hurricane Irene, and Tropical Storm Lee. Through its NY Rising Housing Recovery, Small Business, Community Reconstruction, Infrastructure, and Rebuild by Design programs, GOSR invests \$4.5 billion in federal Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery funding to better prepare New York for extreme weather events. More information about GOSR and its programs is available at <http://stormrecovery.ny.gov/>.

Through the NY Rising Community Reconstruction (NYRCR) and Infrastructure Programs, the State takes on a variety of initiatives developed during its bottom-up community planning process to improve resiliency, protect critical infrastructure, mitigate the risks of loss and damage associated with future disasters, and reduce hardship. Now in the implementation stage, GOSR works with a variety of municipal, county, and non-profit partners to bring hundreds of locally devised proposals to fruition.

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