

NEW YORK STATE
HISTORICAL
ASSOCIATION



PRESERVING
ENGAGING
EDUCATING

Fenimore Art Museum

The Eugene and Clare Thaw
Collection of North American
Indian Art

Research Library

Cooperstown Graduate Program

New York State History Day

October Conference for Teachers

Conference on New York
State History

New York History

Heritage

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**REMARKS DELIVERED AT THE NEW YORK STATE
DIVISION OF THE BUDGET
PUBLIC HEARING IN UTICA, NY, NOVEMBER 27, 2007**

I am here, as President of the New York State Historical Association and The Farmers' Museum in Cooperstown and a member of the Board of the Museum Association of New York, to support the Cultural and Museum Education Act, a priority initiative of the Board of Regents Budget Proposals "for the next stage of educational reform."

The Act, to be funded with \$30 million, will provide critically needed formula funding for museums' experiential curriculum-based programs that bring classroom learning to life and supplement vital literacy programs.

Students comprise 15% of visitors to The Farmers' Museum and Fenimore Art Museum, drawn primarily, but not wholly, from the area bounded by Syracuse, Utica, Albany and Binghamton.

We take our responsibilities to serve and to reach out to these students very seriously, partnering with teachers to develop experiences that will enrich and reinforce standards-related learning in the classroom -- and introduce these students and their families to world-class resources in their own backyards that are theirs to enjoy, over and over again, throughout their lives.

We develop multi-disciplinary units that use art and artifacts, animals and history, landscape and architecture, ingenuity and technology, people stories and problem-solving, to create memorable "Aha!" moments and to deepen learning and pique

curiosity about science, language skills, and cultural appreciation.

We extend our educational reach to other audiences, such as Head Start and their families.

And, as school budgets are squeezed and transportation costs increase, we work to find ways to help teachers and school systems fund their field trips and excursions.

But unlike schools, libraries, and public broadcasting, museums have done this work pretty much on our own or with resources we have raised.

It's time for New York to recognize museums as the full educational partners we are in preparing students to be lifelong

learners and contributors to a complex twenty-first century society where disciplines aren't neatly boxed and where the ability to keep learning is essential. While the proposed funding is modest, it will lubricate gears already at work, and spur new ideas and partnerships to benefit our children and our future.

Two of the Governor's priorities are educational excellence and Upstate revitalization. This seed money, to be disbursed based on the number of students served in curricular-based programs, is important to both of these priorities, and especially when budgets are tight, priorities should focus resources. I urge the Division of the Budget to fight for this and every one of the Regents' reform proposals and keep New York's resources focused on its priorities.