

Business First of Buffalo - July 23, 2007

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## U.S. dollars boost Michigan Avenue corridor, Fruit Belt

Business First of Buffalo - by [James Fink](#) Business First

Plans by Buffalo officials to boost the Michigan Avenue Cultural Corridor and the continued development in the city's Fruit Belt neighborhood were among the several programs aided by federal dollars secured by the local Washington delegation.

In all, Buffalo received approximately \$3.7 million in federal grants for a variety of programs. The funds came from lobbying efforts led by Mayor Byron Brown and pitches made to Sens. Charles Schumer and Hillary Rodham Clinton along with Reps. Louise Slaughter and Brian Higgins. The funding package cleared the respective appropriation committees in both the Senate and Congress.

"This is a positive indication that our message of Buffalo's continuing revitalization is being heard in our nation's capital," Brown said.

Among the programs receiving fund include:

- A \$200,000 Senate appropriation for the development of the Buffalo Urban Arts Center, a linchpin of the Michigan Avenue Cultural Corridor.

The center will house such cultural and artistic organizations as the Langston Hughes Institute, the **Ujima Theater Co.** and the Buffalo Inner City Ballet.

- Congress allocated \$1.6 million for streetscape improvements including infrastructure repairs to roads and sidewalks in the Fruit Belt Redevelopment area located along the edge of the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus. Buffalo is in the midst of a \$30 million urban renewal effort in the Fruit Belt to play off economic development initiatives within the medical campus.
- The Senate approved a \$600,000 allocation for cameras and other security initiatives along streets identified by the Buffalo Police Department as trouble hot spots. Slaughter and Higgins secured a matching congressional grant of \$700,000 for the same program.
- Clinton and Schumer also secured a \$500,000 micro and small business loan program, to be administered by the **Buffalo Economic Renaissance Corp.** The program targets start-up and expansion loans for local entrepreneurs.
- Congress approved a \$100,000 allocation for the Pathways Initiative that works with youth between the ages of 11 and 18 in a violence reduction program.

The allocations must be approved by President Bush. Brown expects little opposition to the funding packages.

"The actions of both the Senate and House Appropriation Committees have earmarked important funding for programs in Buffalo that will contribute to our ongoing efforts to improve the city's overall economy and quality of life," Brown said.

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