

Rothman Gets Federal Funds To Kickoff Sheriff's Video Surveillance Upgrade

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 Trella Cited Need For Increased Court Security

Hackensack, NJ -- A \$500,000 federal allocation that Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ9) secured using his position as a member of the House Appropriations Committee will serve as a downpayment for multi-million dollar state-of-the-art video surveillance system for the Bergen County Courthouse, says Bergen County Sheriff Joel Trella

Trella, who received notice of the the grant from Rothman, said the federal funds will kick start one most important projects needed to increase court security. "I'm extremely pleased that the Congressman was able to direct this considerable grant to my department," said Trella. "Increasing court security is one of my top priorities this year and this money will allow us to get the ball rolling on a new video security system."

Rothman said: "Law enforcement agencies across the world recognize that security cameras are an effective crime deterrent and investigative aid, which is why banks, ATM machines, and many government offices handling sensitive material have them. Now, with this \$500,000 federal appropriation, the Bergen County Sheriff's Department -- the largest law enforcement agency in Bergen County -- will have them at the County Courthouse to keep the public and court employees safe. I was delighted to be able to secure these important funds that will prove to be an invaluable tool for Sheriff Trella and his staff."

Trella has outlined a \$2.4 million, three-phase security upgrade for the Bergen courthouse, which handles 70,000 case filings a year, making it the third busiest county court in the state. The \$1.7 million Phase One of the plan calls for the installation of security cameras at the perimeter of the building and at the courthouse entryways.

Phase One of the three-phase courthouse security upgrade also calls for the construction of a monitoring station and the cable infrastructure that will allow for system expansion in the coming years. The second phase would increase the scope of the video surveillance and the third phase calls for expanded alarm detection. Video monitoring will be done through a personal computer workstations at a command center staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by trained sheriff's officers.

Trella said the receipt of the federal funds will make it easier for him to approach the Bergen County Freeholder Board for the remainder of the funds needed for Phase One of the security project.

"In this age of terror alerts, the county needs to invest in the kind of equipment that will help our sheriff's officers provide the highest degree of security for people using our court system," said Trella.

Rothman added: "In addition to improving court security, which is clearly our primary goal, these federal funds will relieve local taxpayers of \$500,000 toward the cost of Sheriff Trella's security upgrade plan."

The sheriff said he is hoping to work with the county freeholders on a plan to finance the remainder of the money needed to complete the video surveillance program. Rothman noted the security camera funds were part of the recently approved Fiscal Year 2003 budget.

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