

## **Clarence Senior Center Upgrades Strengthen Services for Local Seniors**

The Town of Clarence was recently awarded a Community Development Block Grant from Erie County to complete important upgrades at the Clarence Senior Center. This funding allowed the Town to modernize key areas of the facility, strengthen programs that serve older residents, and ensure the Center remains a welcoming and accessible community resource for years to come.

A major component of the project was the construction of a new garage for the Rural Transit Van that operates out of the Senior Center. This service is vital for seniors who rely on safe and dependable transportation to medical appointments, grocery stores, and other essential errands. Among the 17 towns that participate in Rural Transit, Clarence's van—funded by Erie County and supported by local volunteers—is consistently the busiest, completing more than 1,300 trips each year. Housing the van indoors will protect it from winter weather and allow drivers to begin their routes more quickly and efficiently.

The parking lot at the Senior Center, which dated back nearly 40 years to the building's original construction, also received a much-needed overhaul. Highway Superintendent James Dussing and his crew resurfaced and expanded the lot, upgraded the drainage system, and replaced concrete at the main entrance. These improvements will make the Center safer, easier to navigate, and better equipped to handle daily use.

Other enhancements included a new sign for the Center, an improved entrance for Meals on Wheels, and a new dispatch office for Rural Transit staff. The Parks Department also built a concrete pad and awning for Meals on Wheels volunteers, giving them protection from the elements as they prepare daily deliveries for seniors in Clarence and Newstead. Landscaping updates throughout the grounds further improved accessibility and appearance.

Last week, County Executive Mark Poloncarz, Legislator Chris Greene, and Town of Clarence officials visited the Senior Center to highlight the completed work. Both County leaders noted the value of the partnership between the Town and Erie County and emphasized how Community Development Block Grants help support local services. We extend our thanks to both County Executive Poloncarz and Legislator Greene for their cooperation and support of this project, which will directly benefit Clarence residents.

Several Town departments played key roles in bringing this project to completion. Special thanks go to Town Engineer Tim Lavocat for overseeing the improvements and to Town Planner Jonathan Bleuer for preparing the successful grant application. Appreciation is also extended to Highway Superintendent Jamie Dussing, Parks Crew Chief Jason Holden, and their crews for their dedicated work throughout the project.

As 2025 comes to a close, this has been a year marked by progress and continued investment in the community. From infrastructure upgrades and parks improvements to public safety initiatives and expanded services for residents of all ages, Clarence continues to move forward with strength and purpose. The Senior Center upgrades represent just one example of the positive momentum happening across Town.

Next month's article will feature a full recap of 2025 accomplishments, along with a preview of projects and initiatives to look forward to in 2026.

Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas, a Happy Hanukkah, and a joyful holiday season.