

State Rep. Mark Longietti
D-Mercer
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Longietti announces \$500,000 in additional state funding for Buhl Park Casino Renovation Project

HERMITAGE, May 21 – State Rep. Mark Longietti, D-Mercer, announced today that the Buhl Park Casino Renovation Project will receive \$500,000 in state Redevelopment Assistance Capital Projects funding.

"Buhl Park is our most prized community asset. It brings all of our local communities together and represents a sense of shared history and culture," Longietti said. "Many of us have long-standing and treasured memories that were made at the casino building. I recall attending summer dances as a high school student, where young people from all of the Shenango Valley schools socialized. The funding that we announced today will not only help keep those memories alive, but it will allow current and future generations the opportunity to experience the wonder that is Buhl Park."

"The city of Hermitage is pleased to act as the conduit for this \$500,000 grant to benefit Buhl Park and is eager to continue offering technical assistance for the renovation of the casino building," said Gary Gulla, assistant city manager of Hermitage.

RACP is a grant program offered by the Commonwealth to not-for-profit entities for qualifying economic development projects with cultural, historic or civic significance. After meeting last year with local officials about the Buhl Park project, Longietti made the funding request in the Capital Budget.

"We are grateful to Representative Longietti for his efforts to help make the casino renovation project a reality," said Phil Marrie, president, Buhl Park Corp. "We are excited to break ground on this project in the immediate future."

Last spring, Longietti brought House Appropriations Chairman Dwight Evans to Buhl Park to tour the casino building and discuss the project with the park trustees, staff and Hermitage city officials.

Longietti said Evans was impressed by the history and beauty of the building, the capital campaign that raised the required 100 percent match in funds and the fact that the project was shovel-ready. This meeting proved instrumental to Evans and Gov. Rendell releasing the funding.

"I am pleased that our capital campaign, made successful by the generosity of our many donors, has enabled us to leverage over \$1.5 million in state and federal grants, including the \$500,000 announced today," said Jim Feeney, chairman of the F.H. Buhl Trustees.

Longietti said the total cost of the Buhl Park Casino Renovation Project is \$3 million. Longietti previously announced other funding sources for the project, including \$500,000 of state Growing Greener II money, \$250,000 of state Housing and Redevelopment Assistance money with Hermitage acting as the recipient and \$294,000 of federal Housing and Urban Development funding. The remaining capital needed for the project will come from private funds raised by Buhl Park Capital Campaign.

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