

## Press Release

### Western New York Railway Historical Society Orchard Park Depot Committee 395 South Lincoln Avenue Orchard Park, New York 14127

The Orchard Park Depot Committee of the WNYRHS is proud to announce the long-awaited start of major renovations to the Orchard Park Depot.

On Thursday, August 2, 2018, at 10:00 AM, supporters of the Depot renovation project will gather at the Depot to have a "First Shovel" Celebration.

New York State Senator Chris Jacobs, and former State Assemblyman, now Erie County Clerk, Mickey Kearns, will be present with local officials, Society members, and the public to mark the event.

The Orchard Park Depot has been serving the community for 106 years since its opening in 1912. The Depot is on both the National and State Registers of Historic Places. The Depot's design was inspired by H. H. Richardson's former Auburndale, Massachusetts depot at the behest of businessman, philanthropist, and citizen of Orchard Park, Mr. Harry Yates.

At the time it was built, Orchard Park was a small community of approximately 800 people, who were formerly served by a small station near Bank Street. Mr. Yates had a vision of making Orchard Park an upscale community, and influenced the Buffalo, Rochester and Pittsburgh Railway to build a larger, grander train station to serve the community. He accomplished his goal.

The Depot was the only station along the line to feature a long, covered passenger platform area, a long curving driveway, and significant greenspace, that at one point required two full-time gardeners.

Passenger service, including local commuter service to Downtown Buffalo continued until 1956. While freight service on the line past the Depot continued until 1996. Over the years, the railway used the Depot less and less until it was closed in 1979. Subsequently the building was sold to the late Edward Burke. After contemplating various non-railroad uses for building, Mr. Burke decided

instead to donate the Depot to the Western New York Railway Historical Society, which has since served as its caretaker.

Under the Society's ownership, numerous renovation and restoration projects have been undertaken. In addition, the Depot's electrical, heating, and plumbing systems have been upgraded to current standards. All projects have been performed with the intent to return the Depot to its original appearance wherever possible.

As the years have progressed, in addition to serving as a historical landmark, the Depot has also developed into a major community event venue. Numerous events are held at the site throughout the year.

The increased public usage of the Depot site, together with the normal deterioration of a 100+ year old structure, has resulted in the need for major renovations to the building's exterior.

The "First Shovel" Celebration will signal the start of these renovations. The current renovation project will include the removal, cleaning, and replacement of the original brick platform pavers, replacement of the wood platform roof support columns, installation of a new drainage system, and a regrading of the property around the Depot closer to its original level.

The general contractor will be Lemur Construction Corporation of East Aurora. EB&S Experienced Brick and Stone of Amherst will handle the restoration of the brick platform pavers.

Funding for the project will come from a \$150,000.00 reimbursement grant from State Senator Chris Jacobs, a \$40,000.00 reimbursement grant from former State Assemblyman Mickey Kearns, and donations from the "Friends of the Orchard Park Depot".