

WASHINGTON, D.C. , Congressman John W. Olver (D-1st District) announced that Congress has approved funding for two projects aimed at improving the economy of the Northern Tier region of Massachusetts.

The funding would specifically benefit Greenfield Community College's efforts toward creating a performing arts center.

Olver is the Ranking Member (most senior Democrat) of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development.

Olver said, "The Northern Tier region has a wealth of cultural resources, many of which are underdeveloped and in need of investment."

The funding is included in the FY06 Transportation, Treasury, Housing and Urban Development (HUD) appropriations bill.

The conference report contains the following earmarks:

\$100,000 for Greenfield Community College to study the feasibility of a performing arts center

The Northern Tier initiative identified a lack of performance space as a barrier to the further development of the region's cultural resources.

\$650,000 for Mass Country Roads Traveler and Tourism Website, www.masscountryroads.com

These funds will go toward the expansion of the Mass Country Roads website through additional marketing and outreach efforts.

With these monies the site will expand beyond Franklin County to include the Hilltowns, as well as Berkshire and Hampden counties.

Both of these projects grew from a strategic plan to rebuild the economy of the Northern Tier region of Massachusetts.

Olver said, "I am pleased to have been able to fund many of the initiatives that the Northern Tier working group has identified as priorities."

The Northern Tier region is in northwest Massachusetts, running from the New York border east to Gardner, Massachusetts.

To address these challenges, in FY03 Olver secured \$150,000 in federal funding for the Franklin Regional Economic Development Program.

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