

Institute: Pataki Presented With Book

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From Page 1

"When you combine the educational goals of the Roger Tory Peterson Institute and the economic development factors, how can you go wrong?" the governor said. "How can the state not be supportive? We are going to forgive the debt so that you can continue to grow and thrive right here in Jamestown and in Chautauqua County."

Forgiveness of the debt allows RTPI to seek other funding sources from non-profit community organizations.

"We are so excited about this," Berry said. "This is going to help our program grow stronger."

The Institute is finalizing plans for a private pledge of between \$2 million and \$3 million. The money will help with expansion project that calls for more space for classrooms and holding archives. Berry said the pledge is tied directly to the debt forgiveness.

"The donor is a private individual on our board of trustees," the RTPI official explained. "He wants his pledge to go right to the mission of the Institute, which is our programs, and not to pay off debt."

Berry said RTPI's local board will start considering the expansion plans when it meets Sept. 25. The organization's national board will review the plans Dec. 1. It could take up to two years to finalize the plans and have the construction completed.

According to the Berry, design for the second phase of construction was completed in 1993, and the RTPI officials will have to review and upgrade those plans.

He said two major things have happened in the seven years since the plans were developed — the explosion of the Internet and Peterson's death.

Because of the Internet, Berry said wiring and other upgrades will have to be included in the design. Once that is done, he foresees the Institute serving as a site of teaching and education on a national basis.

Also, after Peterson's death in 1996, the Institute was given all of his creative works, which have filled its archives to capacity.

"We never conceived that would happen," Berry said of what is now a lack of space.

Sen. Patricia K. McGee, R-Franklinville, is credited with making the governor come to Jamestown and to take action on forgiving the RTPI debt.

"I did ask him to come because it is extremely important," she said of the debt forgiveness. "When I told him that this would allow the Institute to leverage more money, the governor acted quickly. This is the start of a strong, aggressive fund-raising campaign for this institution."

In addition to the state elected officials, Berry thanked the Institute's members and volunteers for their work and credited local foundation officials for providing financial support since 1984.

Berry then presented Pataki with the latest in the series of field guides based on Peterson's work, the *Peterson Field Guide to the Birds of the Eastern U.S.*, large print edition. The first field guide was published in 1934 and there are 52 books in the series.

The governor then said he was going to tour the facility with RTPI officials.

"The people at the next stop are going to be mad at me, but I've been waiting to see this and I'm not going to pass up this opportunity," he said.