

## **Hunterdon Emergency Training Facility Upgrade Submitted By U.S. Senator Booker For \$1 Million Federal Grant**

Hunterdon County's Emergency Services Training Center (ESTC) upgrade project could be in line for a \$1 million funding boost, under a Congressionally Directed Homeland Security Spending Request submitted to the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee by Senator Cory Booker, County Board of Commissioners Director Susan J. Soloway has announced.

Soloway reported at the July 20<sup>th</sup> Board meeting, "The Board approved a much-needed upgrade to the ESTC in 2019 because support for our volunteer fire fighters, rescue squad members and other emergency personnel is a priority."

The complex in Clinton Township, where emergency personnel receive education and real time training necessary for various emergency responder certifications, is scheduled for a new burn tower, new classroom training facilities, and a fire vehicle storage facility under a \$7 million plan approved by the County Board in 2019.

Presently, phase one of the project, the construction of a new burn training tower to replace the existing over 25-year-old tower facing its end of useful life, is being finalized.

Soloway said, "Senator Booker has recognized the importance of the County's training center upgrade and included a \$1 million grant for the project, as one of three Congressionally Directed Spending Requests for Homeland Security, as part of the federal budget process. We greatly appreciate his support."

Soloway noted, "We are advised that Senator Booker's requests are considered by the Senate Appropriations Committee, along with the requests of all United States Senators that are submitted.

The funding request must proceed through a budgeting process, that not only includes the Senate Appropriations Committee, but also the full Senate and the House of Representatives, so there is no guarantee of the funds at this moment. The good news is that the Hunterdon County project is one of a few on the list for consideration."

Senator Booker also submitted Congressionally Directed Homeland Security Spending Requests for priority mitigation initiatives under the Essex County All Hazard Mitigation Plan for North Caldwell and New Jersey 211 Partnership in support of ‘Code Blue’ emergency response capabilities.

Soloway noted that the County’s Chief of Staff, Brad Myhre, coordinated the application in consultation with the County’s Public Safety Department and Special Projects Directors.