

Rothman Secures Powerful House Panel's Approval Of \$380,000 To Fix North Arlington's 18th Century Copper Mine Problem

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To Fix North Arlington's 18th Century Copper Mine Problem

Gets The Federal Funds Mayor Pitman Requested To Fix

Collapsed Shafts That Endanger Property

Washington, DC – Following through on his pledge to secure federal funds to fix a collapsed 18th Century copper mine shaft in North Arlington that threatens to destroy area homes and property, Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ9) last night secured \$380,000 from the House Appropriations Committee, the level of funding the Borough was seeking from the federal government. Rothman, a member of the committee, worked closely with his colleagues to ensure that the funds for the collapsed shaft, which is endangering surrounding residential and municipal property, would be included in the Veterans Affairs - Housing and Urban Development (VA-HUD) appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2004.

“These funds will ensure that the collapsed mine shaft is repaired before it creates a giant sinkhole that could swallow up area homes and injure or kill residents,” Rothman said. “While North Arlington's 18th Century copper mines are an interesting part of the Borough's history, finding a copper mine shaft in the ground is not exactly how residents hoped to learn more about them. I am pleased that, especially in these tough budget times, I was able to use my position on the House Appropriations Committee to secure these federal funds, which will relieve local taxpayers from the financial burden of fixing the mine shaft.”

In April, North Arlington Mayor Russ Pitman contacted Rothman about a ground depression on Morton Place that he thought could be the result of a collapsed mine shaft. Rothman quickly responded by bringing to the Borough Mick Kuhns and David Philbin, who are mine experts from the U.S. Department of Interior's Office of Surface Mining, to examine the site. Kuhns and Philbin were part of the team of mine experts who came to North Arlington in 1989 when several mine shafts collapsed. At that time, they helped cap mine shafts to prevent further damage. The experts brought detailed maps and knowledge of the 1989 episode to examine the new depression in the ground. After exploring the site and making measurements, the experts determined that the current ground depression was in fact caused by a mine.

“I am delighted that Congressman Rothman was so responsive to my request on behalf of North Arlington and used his position on the House Appropriations Committee to secure these funds to help fix the collapsed copper mine shaft on Morton Place,” Pitman said. “Thankfully, as a result of Congressman Rothman's efforts, North Arlington residents have been spared \$380,000 from the cost of repairing the mine. At the same time, we are continuing to take all of the necessary steps to ensure that Borough residents and their property are safe. This is a great example of local and federal officials working together to do what is right for North Arlington.”

Rothman added, "This copper mine shaft collapse is a very serious problem that threatens the safety of North Arlington residents. I am very pleased that I was able to get my colleagues on the House Appropriations Committee to recognize the very real danger from this mine shaft and appropriate the federal funds needed to fix it."

The North Arlington shafts were part of the Schuyler Copper Mines that were first mined toward the end of the 18th Century. They were last active at the beginning of the 20th Century. During the 1989 episode, 27 shafts were located and permanently capped. However, the shafts were located using old maps that did not identify all existing shafts.

The VA-HUD appropriations bill next moves to the House floor.

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