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FITCHBURG

## STATE DELIVERS \$10M FOR WALLACE TOWER



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Lt. Gov. Kayn Polito serves a piece of cake to Janelle Chan, undersecretary for the Department of Housing and Community Development, at a press conference announcing more than \$10 million in state funding to convert Fitchburg's Wallace Tower into a model for affordable senior living.

## Senior housing to get major makeover

By Daniel Monahan

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**FITCHBURG** » A state windfall of more than \$10 million will help the Fitchburg Housing Authority transform Wallace Tower into a model for affordable living for seniors and those with disabilities.

City officials said at a Thursday press conference

announcing the grant that \$8 million will come from the state's Modernizing Public Housing And Supporting Elders initiative, which launched in 2016 to improve and preserve public housing around the commonwealth.

"It's a great nexus of public housing and health care," said Fitchburg Housing Authority Executive Director Douglas Bushman.

Bushman said the money will help jump-start several rehabilitation projects that address capital needs and improve accessibility for aging-in-

communities at Wallace Tower. "It's a program that's going to help senior citizens that live in public housing age in place," he said. "So they can live their lives in the communities that they love, surrounded by their friends and family."

The Fitchburg Housing Authority will modernize the 130-unit, high-rise elderly development built in 1973, including upgrading 13 accessible units to current code.

Fitchburg plans to coordinate existing health care programs with new nutritional and socialization programs to

promote aging-in-community in this downtown development with access to local amenities.

"This is a terrific facility and it's going to be even better — it's going to be a showplace," said Mayor Stephen DiNatale. "Aging in Place facilities, such as Wallace Towers, have become crucially important with the rising costs of nursing homes. I would also like to applaud the Fitchburg Housing Authority and all those who assisted with this successful application and continued commitment to our wonderful city."

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This year, the state awarded \$23.5 million grant funding to housing authorities in Amesbury, Beverly, Chelmsford, Fairhaven, Fitchburg, Lexington, and Lowell.

Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito said this round of funding will preserve and enhance 413 state-aided public housing units and improve the lives of senior residents.

"Our older and adults and seniors deserve affordable, high-quality housing that meets their needs and enables them to age in the community they love," said Polito.

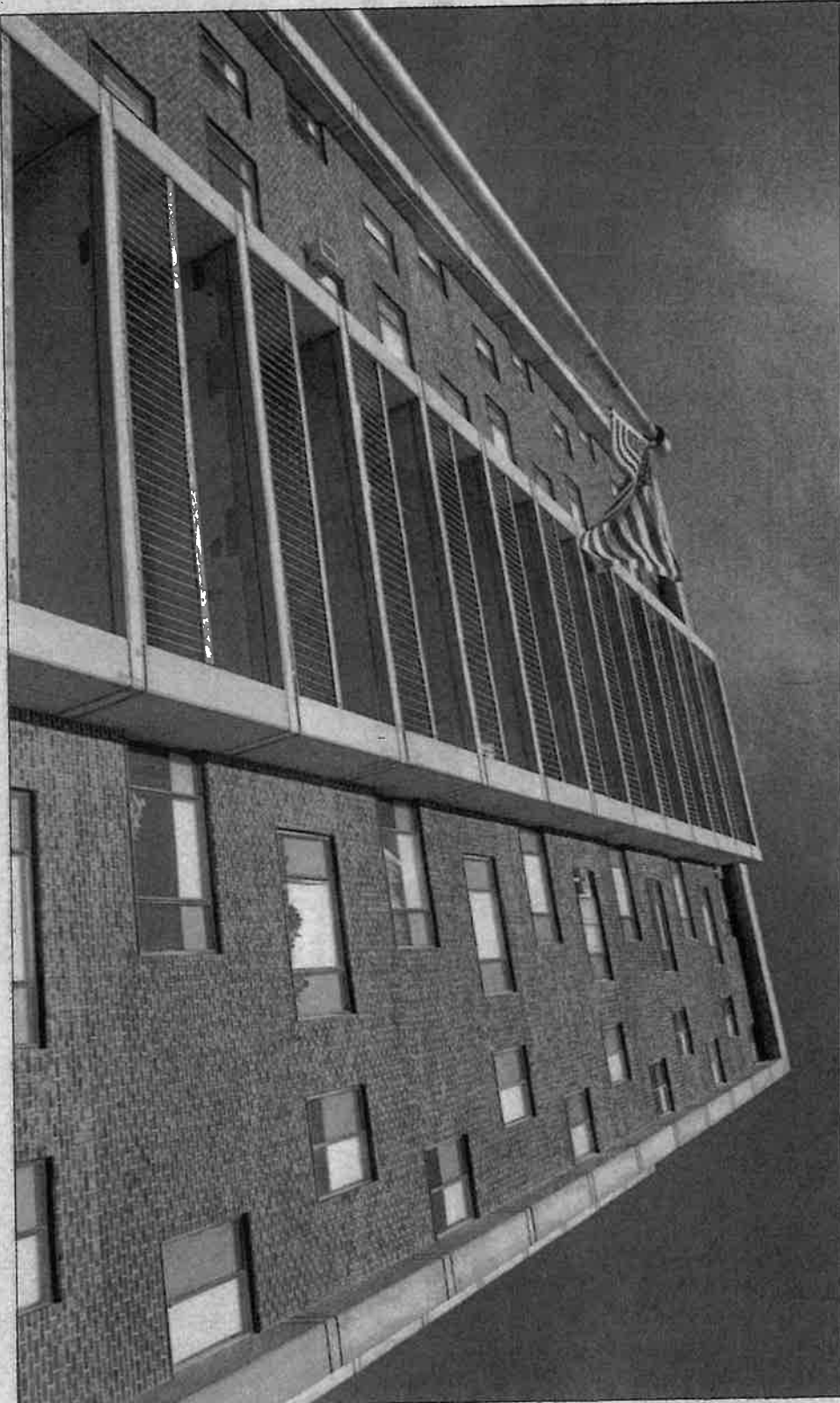
"Today's awards will enable our residents in state-aided public housing to continue thriving, and provide the necessary resources for local housing authorities to address the needs of an aging population.

Each of these awards will enable our local partners to pursue major capital upgrades and incorporate new supportive services for those who need it."

Montachusett Home Care Corporation CEO Lori Richardson said the money will help the city reduce social isolation and provide higher quality housing to Wallace Tower residents.

"People want to live longer in the community where they're from, where they have familiarity, where they have connections," said Polito.

"If their needs change but the programs and services change, then it's hard for you to do that. What we've discovered



Wallace Tower in Fitchburg is in line for a major upgrade.

strong economy, and this grant will help Fitchburg modernize the Wallace Towers.

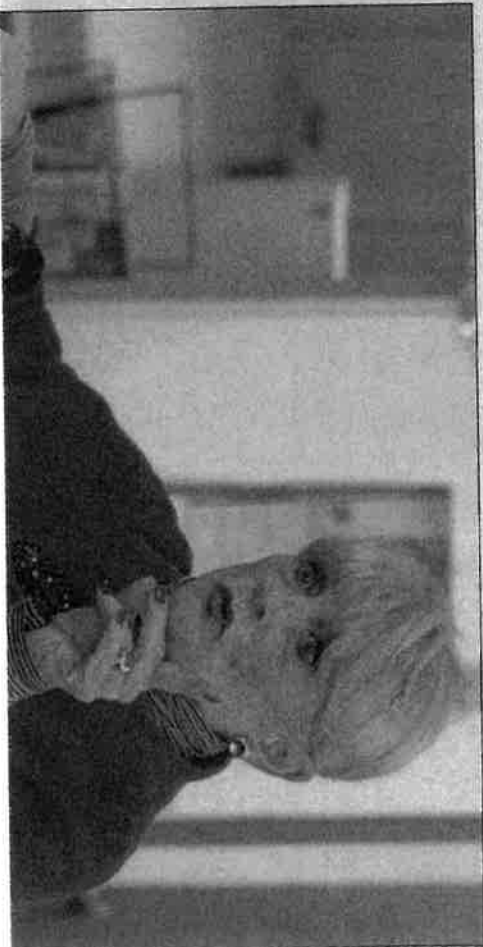
"Today is a day that I am incredibly proud that Massachusetts, the state that I live in, is one of the few states that funds public housing for seniors and people with varying abilities," said Rep. Stephan Hay, D-Fitchburg.

"I'm even prouder that we've decided that those housing facilities where people are going to live for an extended period of

Kris Bostek, executive director of SUMMIT Elder Care, said the Fitchburg Housing Authority has been a tremendous partner since the organizations joined forces to help residents age in place back in 2014.

"I am super excited to be a part of how this community is looking at how we move into the future as the population ages, and has different abilities," said Bostek.

"And how we can all work together to provide



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