



Office of the Mayor

Matthew T. Ryan

Statements Given by Mayor Matt Ryan at the April 6, 2009 City Council Legislative Session

Though the City has remained the lead agency in coordinating the response effort, we are receiving a tremendous level of support from every level of government. I want to take a moment tonight to express our gratitude and heartfelt appreciation to the different agencies and key partners for their expertise and assistance the last weekend, and in the weeks to come.

At the local level, we want to thank our intermunicipal friends, such as Endicott and Johnson City, who responded with mutual aid;

At the County level, we offer our thanks to Sheriff Harder, who gave Chief Zikuski and his team complete access to the full resources and expertise of the Broome County Sheriff's Department;

To the good men and women in the Sheriff's Department, who worked with true professionalism, right alongside our uniformed personnel as if colleagues;

To County Executive Barb Fiala, who was always present during our briefings, and committed resources whenever and wherever needed;

To the County Executive's management team, particularly Brett Chellis, Art Johnson, Darcy Fauci and LA Scheider, all of whom have been working non-stop around the clock to make sure city-county efforts remain coordinated and sufficient;

At the state level, we offer our thanks to the New York State Police department, who assisted with human resources and overtime patrols;

To Mike Najarian and his crew at the State Office Building, for providing us with sound equipment and technical assistance to ensure we could communicate effectively with the community and our media officials;

To the Governor's Office, which dispatched Senior Advisers to work with our response team throughout the weekend to better address our local needs with state resources, including those from SEMO and the Department of Criminal Justice Services;

To Kevin McCabe, the Governor's regional representative, who has been instrumental in our response efforts and with us every step of the way;

To Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo and Senator Libous, both of whom were always eager to offer assistance and make sure we had knowledge of and access to state resources;



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To Senate Majority Leader Malcolm Smith, who committed \$200,000 in two special grants, one to the American Civic Association to help them rebound quickly from this incident, and a second one to the response team's Family Assistance Center, which is an adhoc effort led by the County Mental Health Department to provide mental health counseling and other support services to the families of the victims;

At the federal level, we owe thanks to President Obama and Vice President Biden for prioritizing at the State Department the needs of the victims' family members, and;

To Congressman Maurice Hinchey's Office, which took the lead on making sure these special needs, like correspondence with seven different nations and consulates, securing a VISA, travel arrangements, and funeral services, were being met in a timely and compassionate manner.

But of course, at the center of this response effort, have been those who call Binghamton home. These are the people whose daily contributions are helping to mend our hearts and lift our spirits, and to them, I want to share my deep appreciation:

To the city's first responders, our men and women in both the Police and the Fire Department, whose brave actions remind us again of the nobility, selflessness and pride in serving the public;

To my management team, for working tirelessly over the weekend to ensure our response was swift, smart, compassionate and coordinated;

To members of City Council, who reliably offered support and assistance, and displayed an admirable level of concern and compassion for our constituents;

To the doctors, nurses, and administrators at United Health Services and Lourdes Hospital, for their expert medical care, for prioritizing this emergency, and for working with the victims and their families with grace and compassion;

To those local agencies and individuals who are part of the ad-hoc Family Assistance Center, such as the Crime Victims Assistance Center, the American Red Cross, and the NYS Bar Legal Association, and whose compassion for the victims' family members uphold our nation's greatest principles and our proud cultural heritage;

To Binghamton University and President DeFleur, for helping us facilitate difficult communication between appropriate parties for two of the victims, visiting scholars, one from Brazil and one from China;



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To the students, faculty and administration of the Binghamton City School District, who cooperated with the City every step of the way, from the time of the incident to last night's special vigil at West Middle School;

Which brings me to my final comments:

To the Broome County Council of Churches, who worked closely with Councilwoman Webb and Youth Bureau Director Ana Shaello-Johnson, all day Saturday and Sunday to organize last night's interfaith service. In the wake of senseless tragedy, we always turn to our leaders of faith for guidance, strength, grace and compassion, and the service last night was a powerful beginning to our community's healing process. We can only hope that the fellowship displayed last night can continue to strengthen not just in the coming days but in the many years to follow.

And with that, I must finally thank all of you, the community. The members of this community give me great pride, and the compassion and strength showed by city residents this past weekend has reminded me once again what an honor it is to serve this city. You all have reached out with grace and generosity to the family members and friends of the survivors and the victims, and in doing so, you have strengthened me and my staff as well. For that, I am deeply grateful. Thank you.