

Beyond Lights and Sirens: Tenth Year Anniversary of September 11th

Division of EMS Executive Director Jeffrey Leaming

As executive director of the Ohio Department of Public Safety's Division of Emergency Medical Services and a 30- year veteran in the Ohio fire service, I recognize the dedicated efforts of the first responder community to serve the citizens of Ohioans and its visitors.

Few appreciate the importance of fire service in their community until an emergency calls upon firefighters and EMTs to respond to a life-threatening situation. It is only then that many truly value the skills and training of these professionals and understand their relevant role within one's neighborhood.

Ten years ago the nation witnessed the unfolding disaster of September 11th, a poignant moment in history that while tragic, also yielded examples of the bravery, dedication and service of our first responders during our country's most vulnerable moment. During the tenth anniversary media outlets will replay past headlines that captured ordinary people becoming instant heroes by demonstrating courageous acts of self-sacrifice to help someone in need.

Many are still amazed that someone would jeopardize their safety under those circumstances because they know very few would bravely risk their lives to save the life of a stranger. But for those of you in the firefighting and EMS community, the actions of a few ordinary people reflect the actions you witness on a daily basis: on the job, in your town, and in your instinct.

Nationwide, more than one million firefighters serve American communities. Approximately seventy percent of first responders are volunteers. Every day, here in Ohio, there are outstanding accounts of first responders fearlessly entering emergency situations, quickly assessing and deciding what needs to be done to save a mother, a father, or a child.

Many consider them the gatekeepers into the healthcare system and sometimes the source of primary care for some of our citizens. It's great to know that we are being served by a group who our dedicated to providing the highest level of care.

Properly trained and equipped first responders have the greatest potential to save lives and limit casualties after a catastrophe.

This is not an easy job as Ohio is such a varied state. EMS and fire services are vastly different from one county and even one town to the next. That is why the state EMS Board along with the Division of EMS staff continues to work hard to optimize the level of service to our fire and EMS agencies.

September also marks National Preparedness Month, a nationwide coordinated effort to highlight the importance of emergency preparedness and to promote community involvement through a wide variety of events and activities.

National preparedness starts with hometown preparedness. Hometown preparedness starts with you. Building on existing capabilities at the federal, state, and local level, we'll be able to develop mutually supportive programs that maximize effective response capability.

Through joint planning, clear communication, comprehensive coordination, mutual aid at all levels and increased information sharing, Ohio's first responders will be trained, equipped and ready to save lives in the event of a disaster, whether man-made or natural.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey Leaming". The signature is stylized and cursive, written in a dark ink on a white background.