

SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE

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PRESS RELEASE

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Hope for the Best, Prepare for the Worst

Legislator Spencer Sponsors Training Session to Help Residents Prepare for Disasters

Centerport , NY –With more than our fair share of severe weather related events that have taken place over the last five years, New York has become a state at high risk for disasters. In an effort to prepare citizens, New York State has partnered with local communities to conduct Citizen Preparedness Training Sessions. Legislator William R. Spencer, M.D. seized the opportunity for the training and coordinated an event that was held last night at the Centerport Fire Department. The session, presented by Captain Castillo and Captain Totter of the New York Army National Guard, thoroughly covered how to prepare, respond and recover from natural, man-made or technological disasters.

The training session was opened by Legislator Spencer, “We’ve learned from recent experiences that it is critical for our citizens to be prepared when disaster hits. The better prepared we are the more resilient we will be when we are confronted with extreme situations. I’m thankful to this team of experts for coming to my legislative district and providing this empowering information.”

In his opening statement, the Legislator, also a practicing physician, discussed the evolving Ebola outbreak that has affected several countries and West Africa and has made its way to the United States, “In confronting Ebola, we need to be prepared for the worst, but it’s important to put the situation in to context and understand that the risk of infection in Suffolk County is small. But, there is a plan in place to prevent the spread of the virus and the Federal Government is working with the State and County Health Departments on a coordinated

– *MORE, MORE, MORE* –

effort that will provide rapid response teams to stop further transmission in the event the virus does enter the county.”

Captain Castillo and Captain Totter took over the session from there with a presentation covering four steps to preparedness:

- Make a plan
- Prepare an emergency kit
- Be aware
- Get involved

Following the presentation by the New York Army National Guard, staff from the County and State’s Office of Emergency Management was on hand to discuss recent polices that have been enacted in response to lessons learned from Super Storm Sandy. Such policies include a requirement for the state to stockpile fuel for first responders, highway departments, utility companies etc. in the event that fuel, from typical sources, becomes unavailable. Additionally, a state law was enacted requiring fueling stations in the path of an evacuation route to be equipped with generators.

Several website were provided to the residents with information preparedness:

- <http://stormrecovery.ny.gov/>
- <http://www.prepare.ny.gov/>
- <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/>

Legislator Spencer closed the session with reflections on what he witnessed in the aftermath of Super Storm Sandy, “I saw neighbors helping neighbors and the spirit of community was strong in the face of adversity. I want to encourage everyone to use the information from tonight’s session to take care of themselves, their families and their neighbors.”

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