On May 2, New York State Commissioner of the Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Services Jerome Hauer, gave a presentation at the 9/11 Tribute Center. He spoke about the survey of threats, measures for prevention and how New York State is preparing response systems.

The Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Services and its five offices provide leadership, coordination and support for efforts to prevent, protect against, prepare for, respond to, and recover from terrorism and other man-made and natural disasters, threats, fires and other emergencies. DHSES personnel work to develop communication and coordination with officials in government, the private sector and volunteer organizations who may be involved in disaster response.

Commissioner Hauer said that the threats we are confronting haven’t changed since 9/11. He stated that the biggest threats are still those that arise from materials that are easily accessible and easy to use - bombs and guns. He said that the biggest threats are cyber threats, and he gave examples of computer systems in the intelligence sector and the banking sector that have been hacked. The best way to prevent this is for system users to be more careful.

One of Commissioner Hauer's strongest recommendations is that information sharing among agencies be transparent. He believes that the flow of information from one agency to another is still limited. He also suggested that we as a society tend to forget about the past and become complacent. He did think that residents in the New York metropolitan region are among the most aware of the possibility of terror of any people in America.

In the coming months, New York State will be rolling out a program to teach people how to be prepared for disaster. In most disasters, both man-made and natural, he said people are usually saved by neighbors, not first responders. He would like more people to be trained to help others so that first responders can take on larger tasks, such as evacuating hospitals as they did during Hurricane Sandy.
OCME SIFTING OPERATIONS

As part of the ongoing efforts to identify victims of the World Trade Center attacks, the City of New York began the multi-agency sifting operation on April 1, 2013 which ended May 30, 2013, carefully evaluated and searched material that may contain human remains recovered in the surrounding vicinity of the World Trade Center since 2010. This operation is being conducted at a forensic mobile sifting platform at Fresh Kills in Staten Island.

The NYC Community Affairs Commissioner invited 9/11 families to observe the new operations for sifting and recovering remains from material surrounding the World Trade Center on May 22, 2013. Representatives from the September 11th Families’ Association attended to observe the operations. Almost $40 million in resources has been dedicated to the operations from the NYC Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) and the FDNY, working in conjunction on this effort to recover remains.

Bradley Adams, PHD forensic anthropologist with the OCME, guided the tour of facilities and provided insight to the operations. Adams, a former JPAC employee (Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command which conducts global search, recovery, and laboratory operations to identify unaccounted-for Americans from past conflicts for the Department of Defense) has personally selected 34 anthropologists and archeologists who are screening the material for remains. Custom equipment has been built under the oversight of the OCME specifically for this screening. One of the largest machines was built for the efforts in 2006 in Lower Manhattan and was converted to a mobile operation for the Fresh Kills site.

Each screener oversees sifting of material into ½ inch screen and then through 3/16 inch screen to filter for human remains. Standard archeology practice screens only to ¼ inch materials. Adams noted, “We felt the need to go beyond the normal standard when filtering the material and implemented the 3/16 inch screen to insure a thorough and careful screening for any possible remains.” Each screener has been rigorously trained and is rotated frequently with oversight by the OCME.

One container is sifted per day and then transferred to 5-gallon buckets from the conveyor and poured into each screening station. Press coverage has questioned the two-year delay in sifting the material; however, the coordinating agencies felt the need to wait until all material from possible areas in the surrounding vacinity was excavated and trained professionals were hired to mobilize the sifting operation. A major consideration was also the safety and qualification of workers to have the essential resources to make every possible effort to recover remains.

Dr. Bradley Adams was also part of supervising removal of the airplane piece excavated in April from between 51 Park Place and 50 Murray Street in Lower Manhattan. “The entire area above, around and below the plane piece was excavated and no remains were found within the 100-foot gap and a 12-foot area that was dug and excavated along with surrounding rooftops that were all reevaluated for remains,” said Adams.

As the Chief Medical Examiner Dr. Charles Hirsh said in 2004, “It’s simply a reflection of the commitment that everybody at the Medical Examiner’s Office felt toward the families. I believe it’s safe to say that we believe that we have a sacred obligation to the families who lost their loved ones. That obligation is for us to do whatever it takes, for as long as takes, to identify their loved ones.”

ANNUAL POETRY READING

Since 2007, the 9/11 Tribute Center has been holding an annual poetry reading in April in recognition of National Poetry Month.

This year’s poetry reading featured students from Stoneham High School in Massachusetts, who have visited Tribute annually for several years, came only 10 days after the terrorist attack at the Boston Marathon. The teacher told us many in the senior class knew someone who was affected by the Boston Marathon bombing, and that their visit to Tribute was particularly meaningful to understand effects of terrorism and recovery.

Here are two of the many poems read:

On 9/11 we heard a crash
Because of terrorists who were so rash
We watched in awe and cursed to hell
As we saw how the towers fell.

Families cried and wept for days
And found it hard to get back to our ways
We preserve the memories of those who died
Along with the families that have cried.

We thought terrorists are worse than sin
As people cried, “Don’t let them win”
As people crawled out of houses and holes
We said, “Please, God, bless their souls.”

It’s been 12 years now and we’re doing well
So where were you when the towers fell?
- By Alex

September:
September we rush to class
And sit dreamily at our desks.
Eyes still hazy with summer past
September, a month of remembering everything
We tried to forget over the summer.

September, we watch as planes crash
Into two tall buildings, still too young
To fully understand its significance
Or their evil.

September, a month of remembering the names
And faces of our loved ones.

Another September has passed,
But the feeling of loss still echoes
Through this city with such emphasis
That my bones grow cold.

Another September has passed, but we
Stand proud, without fear.
- By Abigail
The stories of 9/11 told by those who were there... 

NEW TRIBUTE CENTER AUDIO TOURS

The 9/11 Tribute Center has released a new audio tour, available in both Spanish and English, taking visitors through 9/11 Tribute Center galleries and onto the 9/11 Memorial. The audio tour gives visitors a deeply personal look into experiences on 9/11 and the recovery. Thirty-one people talk candidly about their escape from the buildings, the 9/11 Memorial, and their experiences during and after the attacks. These audio tours capture the essential mission of the 9/11 Tribute Center – to remember by telling the stories of those who were there. They narrate a walk through the 9/11 Tribute Center galleries where visitors experience artifacts, multimedia, and photographs conveying the history of the terrorist attacks. Then the audio guides take the visitors on a meaningful walk around the 9/11 Memorial, conveying the history of what happened during the attacks and the overwhelming humanitarian response.

Newscaster Soledad O'Brien will be at the 9/11 Tribute Center next month to talk about the importance of this tour to New Yorkers, and to officially greet the first visitors who purchase the Spanish audio tour.

“We think these heartfelt insights will enrich people’s appreciation of historic events walking on the 9/11 Memorial,” commented Lee Ielpi, the 9/11 Tribute Center’s co-founder and the tour’s main narrator. “I always tell visitors that when they step onto the 9/11 Memorial they are stepping onto hallowed ground. This place where 1,117 people ‘disappeared’ (none of their remains have yet been identified) is a burial site for those families,” he explains. The tour helps visitors understand the emotional significance of both the memorial pools and the “Survivor Tree.” As the tour continues, those who lost loved ones on 9/11 share memories, moving forward and feeling inspired by the rebuilding of the World Trade Center.

The tour features the stories of 9/11 Tribute Center docents – family members, survivors, rescue and recovery workers, volunteers, and residents. “If visitors want to walk by themselves, or do not speak English, we want them to have a meaningful insights a tour can offer,” stated curator Meriam Lobel.

AMANDA RIPLEY ON HUMAN RESPONSE TO CRISIS


Ms. Ripley talked about the human responses to crisis at the moment a catastrophe is taking place. She researched years of disaster reporting to explain the three phases most people go through in life-or-death experiences - and how we can learn to do better. What happens to us, physically, mentally and even socially, at the worst of times? How can we prepare for the turbulence of life according to how our brains actually respond?

Ripley’s 2008 book, “The Unthinkable: Who Survives When Disaster Strikes--and Why,” drew heavily on interviews with survivors of the attacks of September 11th and other major disasters of all kinds. Several of the 9/11 Tribute Center’s volunteer docents contributed their stories to her research.

Ms. Ripley praised the 9/11 Tribute Center volunteers for sharing their stories with visitors on a daily basis, saying, “The best disaster preparation is from people sharing their stories and helping to understand what really happens in a disaster and peoples’ immediate reaction.”

Amanda Ripley is an investigative journalist who writes about human behavior and public policy for “TIME” magazine and the “Atlantic Monthly.” “The Unthinkable” was published in 15 countries and turned into a PBS documentary.

MOOTH PROGRAM WITH TRIBUTE CENTER VOLUNTEER GUIDES

“Parts of the Brain Involved in Fear Responses”

MOTH, true stories told live, is a national organization. Poet George Dawes Green created the MOTH as he aimed to recreate in NYC the sultry summer feeling of his front porch in Georgia; people sitting around telling stories, as moths flickered in the light. The MOTH is an award-winning, not-for-profit organization dedicated to the art and craft of storytelling.
DONATIONS IN MEMORIAM

Paul A. Acquaviva, Esq.
Kevin Bennor
FF Brian Bilcher
FF Michael Boyle

Kevin Cohen
FF Michael D'Auria
Bill Godshalk
FF Jonathan Ielpi

3256 Foundation Golf Outing for NYPD
Sgt. Michael S. Curtin
Monday, July 8, 2013
Cherry Creek Golf Course, Riverhead, NY
https://www.facebook.com/3256foundation

Robin Kaplan Memorial Golf Tournament
Sunday & Monday, July 14-15, 2013
Lake of Isles Golf Course, Foxwoods Resorts, CT
http://rkmgt.com

Kevin Williams Memorial Golf Outing
Monday, July 22, 2013
Port Jefferson Golf Club & Lombardi's,
Port Jefferson, NJ
http://kevinsfoundation.org/events/

Chris’ Chance Golf Outing
Friday, July 19, 2013
Crystal Golf Resort, Hamburg, NJ
http://desimonefoundation.com

Deeg Sezna Four-Ball Tournament
Tuesday, August 6, 2013
Whitemarsh Valley Country Club,
Lafayette Hill, PA
http://www.gapgolf.org and click on
Tournaments to find by date.

Jeff Coombs Memorial Road Race, Walk and Family Day
Sunday, September 8, 2013
Woodsdale School, Abington, MA
https:www.jeffcoombsfund.org

DATES TO REMEMBER

Registration Deadline: September 11th
Victims’ Compensation Fund (Zadroga)
claim for known illness
October 3, 2013
www.vcf.gov or email help@vcf.com

Dan Trant Classic
Saturday, September 7, 2013
Monday, July 8, 2013
Cherry Creek Golf Course, Riverhead, NY
https://www.facebook.com/3256foundation

Visit www.911families.org and select
Events for a full list of upcoming events.

9/11 TRIBUTE CENTER VOLUNTEER TRAINING PROGRAM
October 4th & 5th :: November 22nd & 23rd

September 11th Families’ Association
22 Cortlandt Street, Suite 801
New York, NY 10007