

THANK YOU

Supervisor's January Message

Thank you. To everyone who stepped up during the Christmas Blizzard of 2022, I just want to say thank you. I am so proud of all our town employees, police department, and volunteer emergency responders who worked shifts that spanned 48 hours or sometimes even longer. They kept themselves going even when they were exhausted. They did everything they could under extreme conditions. Our emergency responders are among the best, and even when the storm literally blinded their surroundings and disabled emergency vehicles, they didn't stop.



The call volume to our dispatch centers was significant. Emergency response dispatchers are often unsung heroes during emergency events and I want to be sure we recognize the invaluable service they provide. The conditions were as bad as they could be. The dispatchers and responders did their absolute best, but there was a period of time when dispatchers had to do the hardest thing of all, and that was tell callers that while the fire department tried, help couldn't reach them. The storm hit Amherst extremely hard. It was so intense it paralyzed most response teams. In the absence of onsite response, our dispatchers did an amazing job getting all the information that they could to help those in need. They especially played a critical role in disseminating lifesaving information to stranded motorists.

Police dispatchers answered 795 calls in a 65-hour storm time period and Fire Dispatch received an additional 586 emergency calls, including three significant structure fires and 250 EMS calls. This doesn't account for the emergencies that responders happened upon while responding to other calls.

After the blinding snow stopped between Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, convoys were assembled including a plow, tow truck and emergency vehicles to get to the EMS calls as quickly as possible. Throughout Christmas Day, these teams responded to the hundreds of EMS calls, checked cars and focused on lifesaving measures. That was priority first and foremost.

The Highway Department did a great job tackling the extensive job that Mother Nature left. The heavy snow fall combined with sustained hurricane force winds created drifts that could not simply be plowed. We obtained additional high lifts to clear the town's 1,200

streets. This task was hindered by abandoned vehicles blocking roadways and even some intersections. In all, there were 163 vehicles towed from town streets.

Thank you to the utility crews who worked throughout the storm doing what they could to keep power on in our homes. It was not an easy job. Unfortunately, there were neighborhoods that experienced extended power outages due to the storm's impact. For those who dealt with this issue, I know it was a struggle, but I saw the outpouring of support from neighbors and responders to help anyway they could.

The storm came quickly and those who were on the roadway soon found themselves in a desperate situation. Between the town's fire halls and the Town's Warming Center, more than 500 stranded motorists and citizens in need were housed during the storm event. I want to thank the firefighters and town staff who stepped up to provide care, shelter and food for the storm evacuees.

After working days straight, our responders were desperate for rest. Fortunately, once the storm stopped we were able to dig out relief staff and get them safely to work. A huge thank you to the following fire departments from around the state for providing mutual aid and responding to calls in our community: Bolivar Fire Department, Richburg-Wirt Fire District, Village of Avon Fire Department, East Aurora Fire Department, Allentown Fire Department, Spencerport Fire District, Point Pleasant Fire Department, Lincoln Fire Rescue, Wellsville Volunteer Fire Department and Marion Fire Department, Macedon Center Volunteer Fire Department and Shawnee Fire Department that assisted.

The storm was devastating. Of the 42 Western New York lives lost, our community is mourning the loss of three citizens whose deaths are associated with this terrible storm. My thoughts and prayers have been with and remain with their family and friends. Please continue to show them support during their time of need.

The Town's Emergency Services & Safety Department has decades of experience and once again led the Town through a challenging time. This was an all hands-on deck situation. I have heard numerous stories of neighbors walking through waist-high snow to get food to the fire halls; homeowners who welcomed in strangers when their vehicles got stuck; businesses who kept their doors open to provide escape from the elements; connections made on social media that resolved numerous needs and issues; neighbors sharing what they could to get through the worst of it, and so on.

I am so proud of the Town of Amherst. Together, we saved numerous lives during the worst blizzard in our history. We learned a lot, and will continue to make improvements to be even better prepared to handle the next emergency. Most importantly we learned how strong we really are. [Again, I thank you all.](#)