



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

Senator Young Pushes for Team Effort to Avoid More Flooding Mishaps

CATHARINE YOUNG March 17, 2007

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PORTVILLE - The flooding of a Portville senior citizen complex was "a catastrophe that never should happen again," said Senator Catharine Young (R,I,C-Olean).

"This incident underscores the need for emergency preparedness. I personally called state Department of Environmental Conservation officials on Friday and they are eager to work out systems, including protocols, training and communication with village and Cattaraugus County officials, so that when flood waters rise, there can be an immediate response to relieve pressure by opening flood control gates on Dodge Creek," she said.

"Mayor Tim Emley is anxious to get this resolved, too. The DEC and the village need to team up so we can get everyone on the same page," she said.

"Part of the problem seems to be that the information from the National Weather Service regarding flood levels and cresting of the river were incorrect, possibly due to a defective

gauge. Their readings didn't match what our local officials were seeing," Senator Young said. "I will be working with county Emergency Services Director Ed Koorse to investigate," she added.

"Some of our most vulnerable residents were hurt by this disaster. Seniors and disabled in wheelchairs, on oxygen or needing medication and medical care were displaced. Many of them had cars that were submerged in the parking lot, and of course, they are very worried about what damage they'll find to their personal belongings as the dirty flood waters recede," she said.

"As I visited with the victims at the church shelter, they had one consistent theme. They all were extremely grateful for the caring response they've gotten from everyone, including the volunteer fire department; county health, social service and emergency officials; and volunteers at the Portville United Methodist Church. The silver lining is that so many people stepped up to help. It makes me proud of our area," Senator Young said.

She added that numerous volunteers helped in other areas affected by rising waters, including other parts of Portville, and Allegany and Town of Olean.