



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael H. Ranzenhofer

Western New York Delegation to host roundtable discussion about Winter Storm

MICHAEL H. RANZENHOFER December 28, 2014

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Senator Michael Ranzenhofer and Assemblyman Robin Schimminger, co-deans of the Western New York Legislative Delegation, will host a roundtable discussion on Friday, January 9, 2015 to update the entire delegation and observing public on how the incident management protocols developed to respond to weather-related and other traffic emergencies on major thoroughfares in the Buffalo Niagara region functioned during the unprecedented November winter storm.

The Western New York Delegation will hear from officials at the N.Y.S. Thruway Authority, N.Y.S. Division of State Police, N.Y.S. Office of Emergency Management, and N.Y.S. Department of Transportation and the Niagara International Transportation Technology Coalition (NITTEC) on the events of the storm, which stranded many motorists on the New York State Thruway and other area highways for up to 30 hours in hazardous and even life-threatening conditions.

The lake-effect storm came in two phases from November 11-13, late Monday into Tuesday, then again just two days later. Snowfall rates were estimated as high as six inches per hour, and affected municipalities south of a line from downtown Buffalo to the airport to Batavia.

“While the Northtowns did not directly feel the full extent of the storm with just 7.9 inches of snowfall in the Tonawandas, some parts of Western New York received more than seven feet of snow, highways were shut down for days, businesses were closed all week and 13 people died,” said Schimminger, D-C-I Kenmore. “With each severe weather event, we must look closely at our protocols and constantly evolve to ensure that we have the best possible practices in place for the future.”

“Along with many other Western New York residents, I remain concerned that many motorists found themselves stranded on the Thruway for up to 30 hours in hazardous and even life-threatening conditions despite plans put in place after the December 2010 blizzard designed to prevent such occurrences. This roundtable with officials from the Thruway Authority and other parties will help to ensure that the proper protocols are in place to keep drivers safe in the next winter storm,” said State Senator Michael H. Ranzenhofer.

Also invited to participate in the discussion are Erie County government and the Fire Chiefs’ Mutual Aid Organization, Association of Town Superintendents of Highways and Chiefs of Police Association in Erie County.

The roundtable will be held from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. at Erie Community College South Campus, Dining Hall (Bldg. 5), 4041 Southwestern Blvd., Orchard Park. The forum will be open to the public; however, participation in the discussion will be limited by invitation only.

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