

It is difficult to imagine how bad a hurricane can be until you have seen first hand what a ten foot storm surge or 110 mile per hour winds can do. The same is true for a fire scene. What is it like to be the one that has to go inside a burning house to check to see if there are people inside and to put the fire out? Who are these people that do this type of work? The answer is: they are regular people who have been called or have chosen to work for us the public. Sometimes they do our work at great personal risk.

As the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon is just a few days away, we all may reflect on what it means to be in the eye of a storm, the middle of a fire or on the scene of a terrorist bombing. The people that are there for us are public servants: firefighters, police officers, emergency medical technicians and utility workers. These people are there for us each and every day from the most minor traffic accident to the worst oil spill.

I have worked in City government for thirty years. From car crashes to hurricanes to fires to building and maintaining parks and utilities, I can tell you that the people I have had the pleasure and honor to work with accomplish great things that often go unnoticed.

We often read about what can and should be done to protect our fragile environment. City utility workers are present every day to repair, maintain and improve our water and wastewater systems to actually help make our dreams of a better environment a reality. We have park employees that pick up the trash we leave behind and mow the grass so that our next trip to a park is just as enjoyable as the last.

If you reflect over the coming days on the tragedy of September 11, 2001, the severe impact of a hurricane like Irene or even a "routine" car accident or fire, remember it was public servants that were there first to help fix the problems and restore order as much as possible to daily life.

It is cliché to criticize "government workers". I think we do so without thinking of what these people do for us. We need more dedicated people to join the ranks of

public servants, local government workers that are there for us everyday when we encounter the inevitable accidents, terrible weather or even a terrorist attack. In the meantime, if you think of it, thank a police officer, firefighter , utility worker or other public servant for their good work.