

Suffolk Executive Steve Levy Presents "Key to the County" to Mastic Fire Chief who was Early on the Scene at Gas Leak

posted on 1/11/2011 5:35:38 PM



Suffolk County Executive Steve Levy today presented "The Key to the County" to Mastic Fire Chief Dwight Blankenship for his quick and professional response as first on the scene of a large propane leak in Mastic on New Year's Day. Pictured (l-r): New York State Senator Ken LaValle; County Executive Levy; County Legislator Kate Browning; Chief Dwight Blankenship; Brookhaven Councilman Dan Panico; Assistant Chief Jim Mickert; and Assemblyman Dean Murray.

Farmingville, NY - Suffolk Executive Steve Levy this morning presented "the Key to the County" to Mastic Fire Chief Dwight Blankenship as part of ceremonies organized to recognize the quick and professional response of multiple agencies to the New Year's Day early morning propane leak in Mastic.

"Without the quick-thinking, level headed reactions of Chief Blankenship and the Mastic Fire Department, the New Year could have started out disastrously for hundreds of Mastic and Shirley residents," said Levy. "We in Suffolk should never take for granted the countless hours dedicated to the community by our brave volunteers."

The ceremonies included recognition of the Mastic Fire Department, Mastic Ambulance, American Red Cross, CERT volunteers as well as the Suffolk Police and Suffolk Sheriff. Recognition was also given to the numerous agencies that responded on New Year's Day.

"With 80 units from fire departments and ambulance companies turning out, this was the largest response in Suffolk since the 1995 Sunrise Wildfires," Levy said. The county executive was joined by New York State Senators Ken LaValle and Lee Zeldin, Assemblyman Dean Murray, County Legislator Kate Browning and Brookhaven Town Councilman Dan Panico.

Blankenship accepted the key "not for myself, but on behalf of the entire Mastic Fire Department and all the volunteers on the scene that day."

Senator LaValle said Blankenship will be nominated for the State Senate's highest award for bravery, The Liberty Award, and Legislator Browning will be recognizing Blankenship and the Mastic Fire Department at an upcoming legislative meeting.

"Dwight Blankenship is a true hero. Without regard to the danger facing him, Chief Blankenship risked his life to ensure the safety of hundreds of his neighbors," said New York State Assemblyman Dean Murray. "His actions exemplify the commitment and courage of our volunteer firefighters, who answer the call of their neighbors day and night not for a paycheck - but because of their commitment to public service."

Division of Public Information * Office of the Supervisor

One Independence Hill • Farmingville • NY 11738 • Phone (631) 451-6595 • Fax (631) 451-6258