



U.S. Rep. Louise M. Slaughter
28th Congressional District of New York

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REP. SLAUGHTER UNVEILS NEW COMMUNICATIONS TOOL FOR WNY FIRST RESPONDERS

Buffalo & Rochester, NY - During two events in Rochester and Buffalo today, U.S. Rep. Louise M. Slaughter (D-NY28) unveiled a new communications tool, the "Safety Web of Western New York," for local first responders. Rep. Slaughter joined leaders of the Stargazer Foundation, a nonprofit organization offering free, cutting-edge Internet capabilities to organizations dedicated to socially valuable causes, in demonstrating the web-based technology. NY28 is the first congressional district in the nation to connect its first responders with this tool.

"Improving communications is one of the most critical homeland security challenges that we face," said Rep. Slaughter, a senior member of the House Select Committee on Homeland Security. "This weekend, we commemorated the lives lost in the terrorist attacks of September 11. Our nation learned many somber lessons that day, including the fact that we must improve the ability for first responders at all levels of government to communicate. The Safety Web of Western New York will allow first responders across the 28th Congressional District to connect and better communicate - whether it be during a snow storm or a terrorist attack. I commend the Stargazer Foundation for its visionary work in bringing this technology to organizations across the nation, free of charge."

"Thanks to the leadership of Rep. Slaughter, Safety Web for Western New York not only will provide enhanced communications capabilities for the first responders of her congressional district, but it will also serve as a model for every region in the country concerned about the safety of its citizens," said Art Bushkin, Chairman and CEO of the Stargazer Foundation. "If 9/11 proved anything, it is that the ability to respond with speed, accuracy, and efficiency is the key to saving lives. Safety Web for Western New York provides the 28th Congressional District with important new tools. We look forward to continuing to work with Rep. Slaughter and her constituents to expand and enhance these capabilities."

The Safety Web of Western New York is an Internet portal that can be shared by several people and organizations at the same time. First responders across Western New York will be able to visit the site to access up-to-date information and to communicate instantaneously and continuously during an emergency situation.

The inability for first responders to communicate during the terrorist attacks of September 11 was a critical breakdown identified by the 9/11 Commission in their recent report. As a member of the Select Committee on Homeland Security, Rep. Slaughter has been working to ensure that the multiple agencies and jurisdictions that respond during a crisis will not face the kind of communications failure that occurred on September 11.

Earlier this year, the State of Virginia began offering families and local residents access to StargazerNET ReadyLinks. Using this technology, Virginia residents can set up their own secure, personalized place on the Web where they can find information and communicate with others in the event of an emergency, and can create their own personal communications plans.

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