

Local ceremonies honor victims

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With every tragedy, there are lessons.

Three years ago, Americans rediscovered "how precious and fragile life is," state Sen. Ray Meier, R-Western, said at a ceremony at Utica's Proctor Park.

"We rediscovered that our heroes are often ordinary people who in extraordinary situations find the courage and strength to forge ahead," he said.

On Saturday, community members gathered at the park to remember the victims of the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks.

"We cannot forget what happened," Utica Mayor Tim Julian said. "Especially, we must remember and support the brave men and women of our fire and emergency crews who protect us every day."

Following a moving rendition of "Amazing Grace" and moment of silence, the expressions on the faces of those who serve the community spoke for themselves.

Some firefighters wiped away tears, while others gently bowed their head struggling to keep their emotions in tact.

Plans are underway to build a permanent "CNY 9-11 Memorial Park and Children's Safety Complex" to honor the dedication and bravery of those whose lives were taken by the attacks, Utica Fire Chief Russell Brooks said.

The dedication of rescue workers inspired Verona volunteer firefighter David Kennett to give more to his community.

"It's made me more ambitious," Kennett said, noting his focus on becoming a career firefighter. "I was active before, but now that's all I want to do."



From left: Whitesboro Fire Chief Brian McQueen, Maynard Fire Chief Dan Crossway and Utica Fire Department Administrative Chief Frank Suppa observe a moment of silence at Proctor Park Saturday during a ceremony commemorating victims of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.