

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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County Executive Confident About Dunkirk's Future

Dunkirk: -- Chautauqua County Executive Gregory J. Edwards expressed his thanks today for the tremendous work that has taken place so far following February 24th's massive blaze in the City of Dunkirk.

"Nearly one month ago, fire tore through the Masonic Temple building and nearly destroyed two County office buildings on either side," Edwards said. "Since that time, I have worked tirelessly to get things back to normal for County residents."

Despite the fire's devastating effect on downtown Dunkirk, Edwards said the spirit of the community remains strong.

"I have participated in countless meetings with any number of officials over the past month, and in each of those meetings the overwhelming feeling is that Dunkirk will be revitalized," Edwards said.

Edwards said that he will do all that he can to bring essential County services back to downtown Dunkirk.

"I have a commitment to restoring permanent County offices in the greater Dunkirk area," Edwards said. "I have been working with the owners of the Graf Building to return County offices to that building as soon as it can be ready. In the interim, every effort is being made to provide a seamless delivery of services to the people of our County."

Edwards continued by saying, "Despite false claims to the contrary, no-one is being forced to go to Jamestown from Dunkirk for services. If a person needs emergency services, we have opened an office in Dunkirk at 328 Central Avenue, right across the street from the Masonic Temple Building."

If a person is applying for Temporary Assistance, like welfare to work or other programs that require a case worker, Edwards explained that they are offered an appointment in Dunkirk, but that they might have to wait 1 week for the appointment.

"If they need assistance immediately, they are offered an appointment in Jamestown. If they do not have transportation, CARTS can provide that, and it is free if they qualify."

Call the CARTS office if you would like further information: South County – 665-6466, North County – 366-4500, Toll-Free – 1-800-388-6534.

Additionally by April 12, 2010, just 3 weeks from now, Edwards said the County will be opening a new eligibility office in the Dunkirk area so that no-one will have to travel to access DSS program assistance.

Edwards went on to personally thank his co-workers who have continued delivering services to the County's clients and taxpayers during this time.

"None of our efforts would have been successful without the commitment that they have shown, and their willingness to be flexible during this challenging time."

For the latest information on temporary office locations and phone numbers for displaced County Departments, please visit www.co.chautauqua.ny.us or call (716) 753-4211.

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