

in this
ISSUE

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

HIGHLIGHTS

Special Edition:
Remembering 9-11

CONTACT US

Ask Steve

Feedback



On September 11 2001, America felt its vulnerability even to threats that gather on the other side of the Earth. We resolved then, and we are resolved today, to confront every threat from any source that could bring sudden terror and suffering to America.

George W. Bush

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

by Steve Correll, *Nlets Executive Director*

This month most of us will reflect upon the events of September 11, 2001. We each have a memory of where we were when we heard the news and watched the coverage of the terrorist attacks on America. It is ingrained in our minds like few other events in our history.

The morning of September 11, 2001 found me and four of the Nlets staff, along with the members of the Nlets Technical and Operations Committee (TOC) in Lake Tahoe, Nevada. I had been the Nlets

Executive Director for three months and this was my first TOC meeting. I was overly prepared, excited and nervous. The night of September 10th the staff and members of the TOC had taken an evening boat cruise of Lake Tahoe. Even then Nlets loved a boat ride.

The meeting was held at what was then Caesar's Palace in Stateline, NV and we had the Presidential Suite which had a large meeting room in it and was actually most cost efficient. I awoke early anxious to start the day and be in the meeting room far in advance of the committee. I turned on the television and was greeted with a picture of the North Tower on fire with a report that it was believed that a plane had hit it. At this time there was no news of what kind of event this was. As I watched dumbfounded, I realized that I had a high ranking New York State Police Official in the hotel with me as a member of the TOC, Dennis McCann. I picked up the phone and called his room waking him up and telling him to turn on his TV. As he did so he stayed on the line. His first comment was, "I need to get back."

As the events we are all very familiar with played out that morning it was decided that the TOC would continue its business. As we began our agenda we had a television on so that we could monitor the events as they unfolded and became dramatically worse as other planes were used as weapons against America. As a group of law enforcement professionals, we were mortified and powerless to do anything to assist.

However, I had placed upon the agenda a perennial topic that had been



discussed over the years and determined over the years to be an unreachable need with the way that Nlets was positioned at that time. But staff had come prepared with a proposal to accomplish this daunting task and it was topic number four on the agenda. The Chair moved this topic from number four to number one and an intense discussion ensued.

The discussion in previous years had never been that Nlets didn't necessarily need a DR site, but could it afford it and how would it be accomplished. Nearly none of the states had such a facility and Nlets had always been considered subordinate to the states. This discussion turned to Nlets and its need to remain operational even during an outage and that this may actually be more important than an individual state doing so. If colossal buildings and military strongholds could be destroyed and harmed, certainly Nlets could be hurt much more easily.

The TOC discussed and passed a motion to create a disaster recover site in the most cost effective manner and with all speed early that morning of September 11th. Within ten months and with Herculean effort from Nlets staff, our vendor at that time, PRC, and volunteers from the Idaho State Police who offered to host it free of charge - Nlets found a way, during incredibly difficult corporate financial times to fund equipment and bandwidth to put that DR site into operation. Now our DR site is a virtualized, robust and secure system covering all Nlets services located in Louisville, Kentucky in a facility managed by Nlets.

The TOC in Lake Tahoe that fateful September 11th expedited its business and made efforts to get back home, but not before the air traffic in the United States was shut down. We had members from all over the country in this beautiful but remote location in the Sierra Nevada's. Luckily Caesars Palace had an AVIS car rental office in its lobby and I was able to obtain many of their vehicles for our members to drive home. AVIS waived the one way drop off fee due to the emergency, and members began their cross country trek. Others stayed for many days waiting for air traffic to resume before they were able to return home.

The Nlets staff crammed into a midsize, and the four of us got home in the middle of the night exhausted, and dazed by the events of September 11th. I have always said that for Nlets, something good came out of those horrible events. We looked at ourselves a little bit differently. We saw that Nlets was a critical connector to make all states in their important independence significantly more important in their ability to share with each other over Nlets. And that Nlets was important enough to protect in a way that many of the states are unable to do for themselves.

As each of you recall the events of your own personal September 11, 2001, I know that you will reflect as I do about your response and your emotional reaction to those terrible days. I was lucky enough to be with a number of dedicated law enforcement professionals brought together by the duty and ability of Nlets— people like Brad Long (OK) who was our President at the time and Brenda Owens (FL) who was chair of the TOC, as well as Phil Colby (VT), Delton Tipton (SD), Mike Key (ID) – still on duty keeping Nlets great. We were able to channel our grief and outrage into something good and beneficial for the membership that we serve. It was an incredible time, and one that we cannot ever forget.

I wish each of you peace in your memories of this terrible event in our collective history.

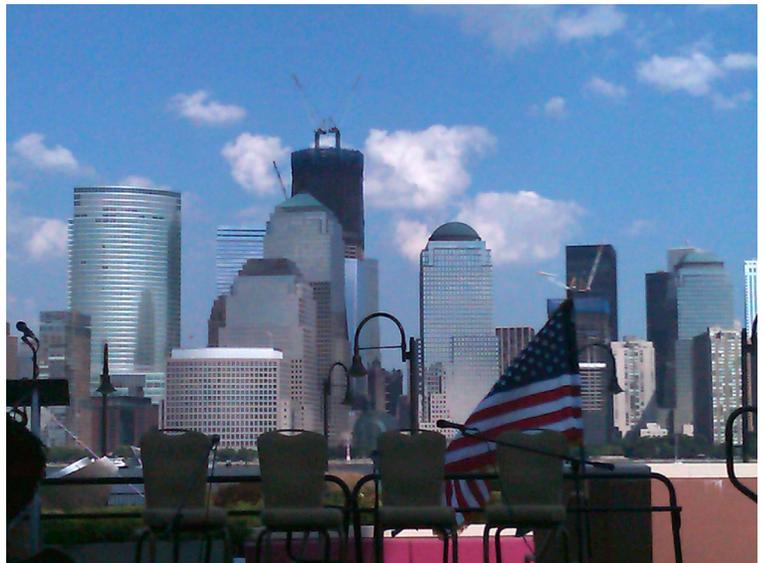


REMEMBERING 9-11

Bonnie Locke, Nlets Director of Business Development

The picture on the right was the view as I listened to a panel of the first responders from ground zero on 9-11 commemorating the 10th Anniversary of those attacks at the Opening Ceremony of the NCJA National Forum last month. They were on the ground on September 11, 2001. They prefaced their remarks by saying they weren't public speakers, they didn't need to be. Their reflections were very moving.

The other picture below is construction of Ground Zero. We had a private tour from a wonderful officer with Port Authority. He lost many close friends and colleagues that day. He was supposed to be in the Towers that day having breakfast but decided to go back to the office instead. He has stayed on to see the construction through, even though he could have retired several years ago.



It once again reminded me why I love working for Nlets. What we do saves lives and protects our first responders and is so incredibly vital to our nation. Not everyone gets to do a job they love and make a difference each and every day.



On September 11, 2001, I was having a business breakfast with a work colleague. I was the Justice Information Sharing Director for the State of Wisconsin. They shut all the State offices down so I went home from Madison to Delafield. I found my oldest daughter on the playground at school and just hugged her. I went home and held onto the other two for a long time. I was crying. They put their arms around me and told me not to be sad. My oldest daughter told me it was a good thing that I did a job that helped keep people safe. You should remember that too.

Delton Tipton (SD), Nlets President

September 11th, 2001, a day that we just refer to now as "9-11."

We all remember where we were at and what we were doing. I was at an Nlets TOC meeting in Lake Tahoe, NV. It was the first day of the meeting; I'd just turned the TV on to watch a little news while getting ready for the day. The first plane had already hit the first tower, and a news chopper was on the scene. I first thought a pilot made a mistake, or the plane had mechanical problems. Then, a short time later, the second one hit, and I, like everyone else, was shocked. What was happening? I'd never seen anything like this before. 9-11 was here, happening before my eyes.

We went ahead with the meeting and had a TV in the meeting room, so we could follow the news. The big topic for that meeting soon became, "HOW TO PROTECT NLETS." On the TOC agenda for this meeting was *Topic 4: A Status Report on Disaster Recovery*. Nlets was already looking into and talking about disaster recovery, but 911 made it a top priority. We needed more network security, and a full disaster recovery site; we needed it sooner rather than later.

Fast forward 10 years, and we find that we have indeed added a lot of security to our site and to the network itself. Nlets now has its own building, and a fully-functional disaster recovery site in Kentucky. Staff continues to review and fine tune the DR plan with the goal of an automated or near-automated process to cutover in the event of an outage/disaster at the main site. 9-11 did not cause us to start thinking Disaster Recovery, we were already doing that; it made us realize it was time to start building and implementing.

REMEMBERING 9-11

John Clawson (IN), Nlets 2nd Vice President

My memories of 9-11 are still quite vivid. It is hard to believe that it has been 10 years since the events of that terrible day. I left home that morning like every other and headed out to audit a local police agency south of Indianapolis.

While traveling to the audit I was surprised to hear the radio break in and report that an aircraft had crashed into one of the towers at the World Trade Center. I continued to listen but never imagined the horrific events that would soon follow.



Upon my arrival at the local police agency, we started the audit and continued to watch the television for updates on what we thought was a tragic plane crash. Within minutes it became obvious that this was an event the likes of which we have never experienced in this country. We watched as a second plane crashed into the other tower and sat stunned as the towers came crashing down. I immediately left to get back home to my family. I listened intently as I drove to the accounts of other planes crashing at the Pentagon and in rural Pennsylvania. By the evening, facts were beginning to come in which made it clear that it was an orchestrated attack carried out by terrorists. Over the next few days I was horrified as I watched the tapes of innocent people running from the collapsing buildings, jumping out of windows and the faces of grieving family members who had lost loved ones.

I felt an anger that I had never known prior to 9-11, I felt incredible sorrow for the loss and suffering of innocent lives and I felt a sense of patriotism and pride as I saw Americans unite against a common enemy. I recall talking with a close friend who is also a Trooper as we watched and heard the stories about the heroic acts performed by police, fire and other emergency service personnel who rushed to the scene. We considered those who were climbing up the tower stairs as so many were rushing to get down them and agreed that if we had been there, we would have been climbing up those dark stairs as well. We tried to imagine what was going through their minds, they knew full well the danger of the situation. They went in spite of the danger, they went because they were men and women of honor, called to a higher mission.

I had similar feelings as I heard about United Airlines Flight 93. I heard early on that it had crashed, but when the full story of heroism was finally reported I knew that America had delivered the first of many blows to those who had planned and carried out these egregious acts. Civilians decided to stand up in the face of certain death and thwart the evil intentions of terrorists. Americans, proud and strong, standing in the face of evil and saving countless lives in the process.

America was united and patriotism was riding high as we pursued those that would do us harm. They changed the world, we lost our innocence in some ways, but we did not succumb to fear, to the evil intentions of a few. We saw the strength and character of our fellow Americans and we are stronger for it. It is my sincere hope that we will never lose that sense of patriotism, our commitment to this great country.



I have always been patriotic, but following 9-11, the Pledge of Allegiance, the National Anthem and God Bless America have held an even clearer and deeper meaning for me. I pray for our service men and women, our public safety workers and the families of those lost on 9-11 as I ask God to continue to protect this great nation.

In the years following 9-11, on this tenth anniversary, I am thrilled to know that we have not suffered another attack on the homeland. Technology has been instrumental in identifying and suppressing many potential threats. I am honored to know that Nlets has and continues to stand at the forefront of this vital fight to protect America and her citizens.

May God bless this great nation.

REMEMBERING 9-11

Laura Carter, Nlets Business Manager & HR



In 2001 the Nlets staff was composed of 10 dedicated hard working employees. Three months prior to 9-11, we had just hired a new Executive Director, Steve Correll to replace Tim Sweeney who had worked for Nlets over 27 years. Steve and his 2-person administrative staff managed the business and financial operations of the corporation. Our Director of Operations, Frank A. Minice had a technical staff that consisted of the Network Operations Coordinator (Frank L. Minice) and 5 Analysts. At that time, Nlets averaged 16.7M message per month and had an annual gross revenue budget of \$1.7M.

After the events of September 11th, it became evident that Nlets needed to step out from behind the curtain and market itself as the well-established secure message

switching network that, at the time, connected to over 400,000 devices nationwide. As key governmental agencies were anxious to establish new networks to share data, Nlets stepped up and began marketing our network services to the law enforcement community.

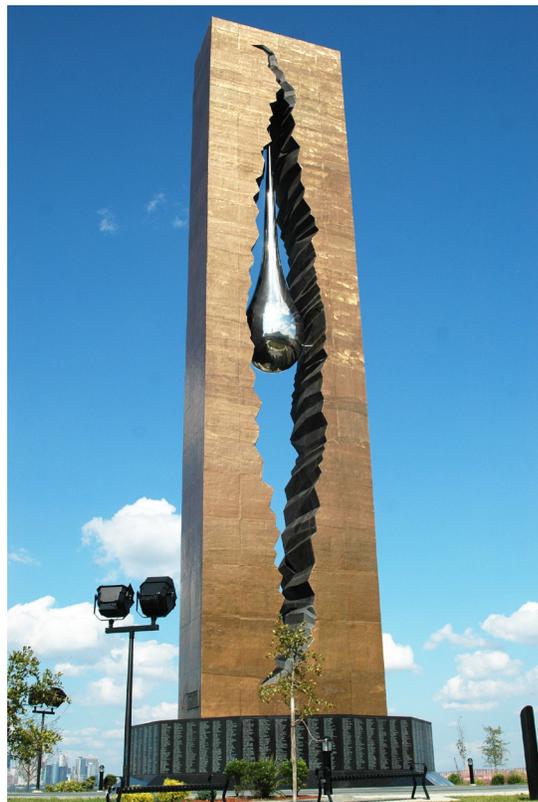
As our network traffic grew, so did the need for our internal resources. The small HR hat that I had worn for the past 11 years had quickly grown into the size of a sombrero. As our revenue and services increased, we started strategically hiring personnel to fit the needs and requirements to support our growth. Today, 10 years later, our IT department includes 18 technical experts; we have a full accounting and administrative department with 6 employees; our business development department has three employees that manage our outreach and grant efforts; and finally, our 2 project managers actively provide oversight to 50+ ongoing projects. These 30 employees provide the added depth required to continue our exemplary level of service and support that we have always provided to the Nlets membership community. The events of 9-11 made Nlets a bigger, better and more robust network that now reaches over 900,000 PC, mobile, and handheld devices and processed more than 1 billion messages last year. The small staff that I became a part of over 20 years ago, has now matured into a post 9-11 world with the same ultimate goal of keeping our officers safe on the street. A mission that our staff proudly lives out every day.

Curt Wood (MA), Nlets 1st Vice President

As the tenth anniversary of 9/11 approaches, all of us should take a few minutes, if not longer to reflect upon the past 10 years. I am sure we all remember where we were and what we were doing that tragic morning.

For me, I had just finished teaching an 8 am Introduction to Criminal Justice course at a small catholic college in the Boston area. Retired nearly 4 years from my public safety career, I was now enjoying my new way of life: influencing young minds with a real life look at our justice and public safety systems. As I walked into the student lounge that morning at around 9 am, I was met with faces of confusion and bewilderment as the students surrounded the room's television, I the only instructor in the room and the only adult. I quickly realized that these young people had not yet grasped what had happened. There was no crying - just silence. It was surreal. As the minutes passed students and faculty joined together to watch in silence. Classes were cancelled for the rest of the week. I remember the next morning as I awoke to a new day and the silence of the sky. My home is minutes from Boston's Logan Airport. No flights above, only the roar of patrolling F-15 fighter jets streaking across the Boston skyline.

I came out of retirement a few months later. **Never forget!**



REMEMBERING 9-11

Kyle Darnell, Nlets Project Manager

September 11, 2001, started off for me as a day just like any other. I was at Nlets headquarters in the Arizona Department of Public Safety compound. I was just wrapping up my graveyard shift when the local morning news was interrupted to report that a plane had just flown into the World Trade Center. I stood in awe, watching as another plane was flown into the second tower. Our day shift operator at the time, Dan Nelson, could tell before I even opened the door that something major was wrong. I could hardly get words out as I pointed to the TV.

Over the next few days, sleep was sparse; working all night at Nlets, and then staying up all day watching around the clock coverage of Ground Zero. I didn't know what to make of my emotions. I was sad and angry, but most of all, I felt useless. I was 21 years old and newly married and I couldn't get out of my head that I needed to somehow contribute to my country, to make sure that nothing like this ever happened again. Immediately I began to research enlistment into the Marine Corp. I argued and pleaded with my wife to get on board with what I felt was my "duty" to my country. She argued and pleaded that I not enlist. She hoped to start a family soon and was not prepared to raise children on her own. She believed that there were other ways to support our country.

The next few weeks seemed to fly by. During that time significant changes were being made at Nlets. Immediately the need for a disaster recovery site became evident. Database searches were being completed around the clock by Nlets staff on suspects of terrorist watch lists. News telecasts had quickly changed their focus from grief and mourning, to identifying weaknesses and trying to determine how this could have been averted. The underlying theme in almost every newscast was a lack of communication; agencies not sharing information with one another, not getting the right information into the hands of the right people. That's when it hit me, that is exactly what Nlets does. We get the right information to the right people. I realized then that this was another way I could contribute to the safety and betterment of my country. At that moment, my position at Nlets became more than just a job. It became a career, and a lifelong goal to contribute to the

law enforcement community and the courageous people across the country that put their lives in harm's way every day.

In 2001 nobody knew who or what Nlets was, but they understood that there was a need to share information. Nlets had been doing that under the radar since the sixties. On 9/11 it became evident that Nlets could no longer operate under the radar. With the leadership and direction of our Newly Elected Executive Director, Steve Correll, Nlets rose to the challenge and began breaking down barriers and sharing new data sets that had never been shared before. Nlets strives to make sure there are no impedances



to sharing critical data and I am proud to play a role in that mission. Now looking back over the last 10 years, I feel that I can say without a doubt, Nlets makes a difference in the safety and security of our country and we are all safer because of it.

REMEMBERING 9-11

John Lawson, Nlets Operations Supervisor

The Nlets TOC was meeting in Lake Tahoe NV. Nlets Reps from the US and Canada were discussing technical topics that would affect Nlets in the upcoming months. Early that morning, my oldest daughter called, woke me up, and asks if I am watching the TV and the events going on along the east coast. Just after I turn on the TV, the second of the twin towers is hit by a jet plane.

The TOC met that morning around a TV. Watching the events and discussing what this means to Law Enforcement in the US and Canada. In that day's discussion, one of the topics brought up is that Nlets needs a Disaster Recovery location, and soon. Within a short time, the Nlets TOC, and then Board of Directors, approved a DR site location and Nlets was on its way to redundancy, and added security.

It has been 10 years now, and Nlets has gone from 10 employees to 32 employees, from no DR site to our second DR site. Even though we were used by all the states to move queries and responses, we were not known by those outside our membership. Now our membership includes all States, US territories, Federal agencies that have law enforcement divisions, Canada, and Interpol. We have other groups that have associate memberships that supply data to law enforcement. Nlets is no longer the 'National Law Enforcement Telecommunications System', it is now 'Nlets: The International Justice and Public Safety Network'.

After 9-11, it's easy to say, as Steve Correll, Nlets Executive Director, shared in the meeting that morning, "Nlets, does the right things for the right reasons."

Brad Long (OK), Nlets President 2000-2002

In retrospect, 2001 was a transitional year for Nlets, and a time when tragic events would bring us together, and the world would meet the resolve of our nation.

Monday, September 10, 2001, began as a typical day for a number of Nlets Representatives and Staff Members. Brenda Owen (FL), Isaac Kervin (AL), Dennis McCann (NY), Mike Igoe (CO), Mike Key (ID), Phil Colby (VT), Bob McNeely (IL), Delton Tipton (SD), David Bolme (TN), Jim Cook (MI), Gerry Coleman (WI), Kim Smith (FBI), along with Nlets Staff Members, Steve Correll, Frank Minice, Laura Carter, Frank Lewis, John Lawson and I were traveling to attend the Nlets Technical Operations Committee meeting in Lake Tahoe, scheduled for September 11-12, 2001. One of the most beautiful and pristine destinations in the United States, Lake Tahoe could not have been a better place to convene the fall TOC. We all looked forward to a respite from the summer heat while we addressed the TOC Agenda items.

The summer of 2001 marked the retirement of longtime Executive Director Tim Sweeney, and ushered in a new Executive Director, Steve Correll. Tim's retirement culminated at the Nlets Annual Conference in Puerto Rico. The Nlets attendees, joined by Tim's family, expressed a sincere appreciation for his commitment and many accomplishments while leading Nlets over the years.



REMEMBERING 9-11 *(Brad Long continued)*

Steve Correll, the new Executive Director, was young, bright and energized to lead the Nlets organization into uncharted territory by not only continuing to fulfill the mission of Nlets, but by expanding the mission to bring new ideas and solutions to the public safety community and to be the champion of information sharing.

So on September 10, 2011, Technical Operation Committee Members and Nlets Staff traveled to Lake Tahoe to tackle the issues before us.

Little did we or anyone know that the next day would change the world!

I was awakened early the morning of September 11th by a phone call from one of my staff members in Oklahoma saying an airplane had flown into one of the World Trade Center Towers. No details were available at the time as to the cause of the “accident.” I got up and prepared to go downstairs to meet with my colleagues.

Within a few minutes, the second plane had flown into the other World Trade Center Tower, and subsequently, the Pentagon was struck by another plane. The terrorist attacks ended that day with the heroes of United Airlines Flight 93 taking matters into their own hands in an incredible story of courage and heroism by forcing Flight 93 to crash into a field in Pennsylvania.



Shortly, all of us arrived at the TOC meeting room with the understanding that the events of that day were driven by a terrorist attack against the United States of America. As I remember, the group as a whole was somber but calm. The first order of business was contacting our loved ones back at home to make sure they were alright, along with letting them know we were safe as well. We called our staffs to ensure everything was being done to provide vital information services in support of the tragic event.

Steve asked the hotel staff to bring a TV into the meeting room so we could watch as events unfolded during the day. We elected

to continue the TOC meeting, so Chairman Owen worked us through the agenda that day, but with one eye always watching the television waiting for updates to the events of that surreal day.

As we continued to learn more information during the day, it was apparent returning to our home bases would be the next order of business. As we all remember, the days after 9-11 were difficult at best for travel. Steve and several of the Nlets staff members rented a car and drove back to Phoenix in order to have a maximum force in place to ensure the continued operation of the Nlets systems in light of the events of 9-11. A few of the Committee members also rented vehicles and drove back to their home bases. Most of us stayed put until the airlines were allowed to begin flights. We each supported our staffs the best we could via telephone until we were able to get home.

This was a very emotional time for those of us at the meeting, and certainly no different for anybody else in the world wherever they were when these tragic events unfolded. When thinking back, the events of that day seem surreal. It is still difficult to believe that this could have ever happened; but it did, and it is our reality.

Needless to say, a lot has changed in the past 10 years for the world at large and Nlets. From an Nlets perspective the motions from that meeting to create a disaster recovery site and to limit traffic over the network from the Internet are but a footnote to what Nlets is today.

REMEMBERING 9-11 *(Brad Long continued)*

The use of the Internet in public safety has almost become an afterthought within the community, and it is widely used



now for exchange of sensitive data. And of course, Nlets now has a full service Disaster Recovery site in Kentucky by the way of Mike Key and the Idaho State Police assisting with the first edition of a DR site for Nlets in Idaho.

Since 9-11, Nlets has grown significantly throughout the public safety community, in the form of a brick and mortar with the new facility in Phoenix, to the new technology solutions for information sharing. Whether it is the sharing of images or the fusing of data, Nlets has been at the forefront to encourage and promote information sharing internationally.

I always believed Nlets would become the catalyst for information sharing many years prior to 9-11; but there is no doubt that 9-11 hastened the efforts to do so. And of course,

Nlets had the resolve and leadership to face the challenges to vastly improve information sharing. They made it happen, and continue to do so today.

Out of tragedy, good can come. These events help us focus on what is critical for our nation by encouraging the sharing of information across jurisdictional lines to assist in the prevention of international and domestic terrorism and criminal acts.

Nlets has learned from these events, and has become very astute in leveraging relationships at all levels of government and within the private sector; whether it be various grant programs, developing strategic partner initiatives and technology to ensure positive outcomes, all of which play a part in protecting the public and the overall safety of our nation.

Over the last decade since 9-11, there has been a tremendous amount of change in Nlets. If 9-11 was the last one of these events to occur, then it could be said Nlets has fulfilled its mission and nothing else needs to be done.

Sadly, that is not the case. It remains for Nlets and other similar organizations to do their very best, looking over the horizon and anticipating the needs for public safety technology and information sharing. The future is now, and the vision must extend beyond to make sure we are prepared to engage those who desire to enact another 9-11 on the United States and the other free countries around our world.



In the coming days, there will be numerous memorials to commemorate the 10th Anniversary of 9-11, as it should be. Each of us should take time to remember those who lost their lives, those who were injured and are still suffering, family members who will continue to go through difficult times for the rest of their lives, and those public safety members that did their best to save lives and, in some cases, gave the ultimate sacrifice.

Remember your job is never done. Become involved and do your best to make a difference.

God bless those who are overseas fighting for our freedom, and those who are protecting us at home.

REMEMBERING 9-11

Kayelyn Means, Nlets Communication Specialist

The morning of September 11, 2001, I sat in my English class, the room silent as we all stared at the screen on the wall. A building in New York had been hit; a federal building had been hit, and a plane crashed somewhere else. Our teachers told us this was a moment of history in the making, so we sat and listened as intently as our adolescent attention-spans would allow.

I didn't know anyone who died that day; I didn't know anyone who knew anyone that died. I didn't know how those tragic events would change the world I would grow up in.

Immediately, I observed that patriotism spread throughout my community like rapid-fire. Flags hung at every home, and candlelight vigils were held consistently. Our president's face was everywhere, and people rallied behind his words of unity and triumph. Some adults cried over what happened, others yelled.

Gradually, patriotism and pride seemed to disappear, and I noticed other changes take their place. People began to despise the president they once spoke so well of, and they opposed the war they had once supported. Natural disasters wreaked more devastation across the world; technology took over, and new devices never stopped coming.

Our world is radically different today from where it was ten years ago—no matter where we heard the news that morning, we can all agree that this is true. I can't say if these changes came about from that day or not—the only world I've ever really known is a post 9-11 world, a world where change is the only daily consistency, where technology rules our lives, and everyone is a 'self-published journalist' through the Internet.

When I look back on 9-11, I read the stories of the heroism of that fateful day, and come to better understand the impact that day had on the world. I am stirred with pride for the generations before me; the Civil War, Pearl Harbor and WWII, and 9-11—the generations preceding “generation y” have set high standards, and paved the road of liberty my generation so often takes for granted.

On this 10th anniversary of 9-11, I don't look back on the world as it was to compare it to the world today; I look, with sincere and reverent gratitude, to the men and women who have sacrificed, and those who still do, to make this country what it is, and to protect and preserve the freedoms that we are so fortunate to have. I would like to express my gratitude to those who protect our nation both at home and over seas.

CONTACT US

ASK STEVE

Steve Correll, Nlets Executive Director, is always available to answer your questions.

Please send your questions to asksteve@nlets.org.

FEEDBACK

We welcome your feedback on:

- Questions or comments regarding the current issue;
- Ideas for future newsletter content; or,
- Corrections.

Contact us at info@nlets.org.

