

COLUMBUS CONSOLIDATED GOVERNMENT

Georgia's First Consolidated Government

Post Office Box 1340

Columbus, Georgia 31902-1340

Telephone (706) 653-4712

Cell (706) 905-9570

FAX (706) 653-4970

TDD (706) 653-4494

TERESA TOMLINSON

Mayor

September 12, 2017

Dear Columbusites and community partners:

As I survey the damage from Tropical Storm Irma, I realize how fortunate we are that the storm weakened and the southern part of the storm sheared off to the northeast. That is no solace to the families whose homes have been damaged and who are still without power. It is amazing, however, to think that the eye of what was once thought to be the "largest and most powerful storm" on record passed right over Columbus. Given what might have been, we are fortunate despite the damage we sustained.

I want to thank our community for heeding the call to stay indoors and off the streets. We had very few storm-related injuries as a result. As you resume your normal activities and travels, proceed with caution. There are trees down and branches that have yet to fall.

We need to thank our Public Safety personnel and First Responders, who on 9/11 – a day to celebrate them – were in dangerous weather conditions protecting lives and property and serving our community. We have an outstanding local Emergency Management crew and executive leadership in our City Manager, Assistant City Managers and Department heads. Here in Columbus they prepare for these weather (and other emergency) events long before we realize the threat.

Now comes the clean-up and recovery phase of Irma. Our Public Works crews are already out clearing trees and debris from the road and providing normal garbage pick-up service. Rarely are they thanked enough, so if you see them out there in the rain, say "hello" and let them know they are appreciated.

Our partners at Georgia Power and other utilities are hard at work already this morning restoring power and other necessities, like cable!

The media has been tremendous. We are fortunate to have professional, responsible media in our community and they did a great job braving the elements to bring you the information you needed to make decisions and stay safe. We also are glad for our new friends from the Atlanta and national media who thought enough to inquire as to the people of, and the conditions in, Columbus.

We want to thank our local Red Cross, its Director Adelaide Kirk, Alex Balkcum (who headed-up the shelters) and all the many, many citizen volunteers who came to work at the shelters and who brought needed items. Rarely in a crisis such as this (tending to some 700 evacuees from Georgian and Florida), has there been such an “over abundance” of generosity. We had more than was needed to fulfill the mission at hand and we are so very grateful for this generous community.

This community comes through challenges and thrives because we respect calls for responsible action and calm. We understand that we are all connected and a foolish act by one may cause injury to another. You all were amazing in following the information and helping to spread the word when needed. Thank you, and I’m glad you stayed safe and sound.

A thankful, grateful mayor,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Teresa Tomlinson', with a large, stylized initial 'T'.

Teresa Tomlinson