

City of

Marathon *Florida*

**Press Release (#97-26) | CITY OF MARATHON**  
9805 Overseas Highway Marathon, Florida 33050  
305-743-0033

**For Immediate Release:**



Firefighter gear stands at the ready before Friday's 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony at Marathon Fire Rescue Station #14.

**City marks 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of 9/11**

**MARATHON, FL (Sept. 11, 2026)** – A slightly overcast sky, symbolizing the somber mood of Friday's 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony, quickly turned bright and sunny, matching the messages of hope of a better future that rang from Station #14.

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Marathon Fire Inspector Mike Card began the ceremony by ordering flags to be flown at half-staff and providing opening remarks, followed by Marathon Fire Rescue Chief Shana Rogers, who reminded those in attendance of the sacrifices not only of that day in New York, Washington, and Pennsylvania, but also of the commitment and dedication to safety and the protection of others by Marathon Fire Rescue.

The event also featured Father Oscar Perez of San Pablo Catholic Church offering a Prayer of Remembrance and three chimes of the bell led by Card, commemorating the three attacks of that day 25 years ago.

Guest speakers at the ceremony included Marathon City Manager Steve Williams, Marathon Mayor Lynny Del Gaizo, and Monroe County Emergency Management Director Cory Schwisow.

In his speech before the estimated crowd of 75 people, Williams encapsulated the thoughts and feelings of those who have lived through numerous earth-shaking events and tragedies.

Watergate. The Challenger disaster. The Gulf War. The global pandemic. While each left a mark on hearts and souls, 9/11 stands out for all, Williams said.

“We are a small town thousands of miles and a quarter-century removed from the greatest tragedy of most of our lives,” Williams said. “I don’t need to explain to everyone my age or above how the world has changed ... It can not be explained.”

“What my generation has to understand is that 9/11 is, to those just born, what Pearl Harbor or Hiroshima was to us. Our job here today is to make sure that history does not fade to black-and-white film.”

The city’s new manager talked of lessons learned from the tragedy.

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“If 9/11 taught us nothing else, it taught us we are and should always be a unified country,” Williams said, a burst of hopefulness springing in his voice. “9/11 made the impossible, possible.”

Del Gaizo’s impassioned speech brought the message of hope home to Marathon.

“Here in the City of Marathon, we understand the meaning of community,” the mayor said. “We are a small community, but we have always shown that our strength is not measured by our size. It is measured by how we care for one another.

“September 11<sup>th</sup> reminds us in moments of uncertainty, we have a choice,” the mayor continued. “We can allow fear and division to pull us apart, or we can choose compassion, courage and unity.”

Monroe County Emergency Management Director Cory Schwisow, who served in the U.S. Navy for more than 20 years, recalled his time in service and how the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> shaped his life and the lives of so many others.

He noted the similarities between his service during that time and the “call to action” accepted by so many since then.

“It means answering the call, even when you don’t know what lays ahead,” Schwisow said. “Because the men and women of our fire departments, law enforcement, EMS, and public safety understand the same calling.

“They run to the fight, never away from it.”

Schwisow later reiterated Williams’ call to action.

“[Remembrance] requires us to tell this story to the generations who are not yet born or too young to remember,” he said.

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“It requires us to remember what happened afterward: Strangers helping strangers; fire responders [running] toward the danger; military members [standing] ready to defend their country. And for a moment, despite everything that divides us, we stood united.”

Following the speakers, members of the Marathon American Legion Post 154 Color Guard presented the colors and offered a 21-gun salute while “Taps” was performed to in honor of those lost.

As Doug Morgan performed “Amazing Grace” on bagpipes, guests slowly left the ceremony, many wiping away tears.



LEFT: Marathon Fire Chief Shana Rogers and Fire Inspector Mike Card pose for a photo before Friday's ceremony. RIGHT: City Manager Steve Williams delivers his speech on Friday.

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Marathon Mayor Lynny Del Gaizo, left, and Monroe County Emergency Management Director Cory Schwisow deliver remarks at Station #14.

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Members of Marathon Fire Rescue Station #14 watch the lowering of the U.S. flag to half-staff Friday.

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