



Photos by Frank Scott

Above left is scene of the Washington Street Mall that is extremely rare for the end of August – no people. Above center is a view of the dune at Cove Beach taken by West Cape May property owner Frank Scott. Above right is a shot of the same area after Hurricane Irene scoured away the dune, leaving it much smaller and the rock jetty exposed. The Cove Restaurant, right in photos, was spared any damage from the hurricane.

Irene

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sites. All nursing homes in the county have plans for evacuations,” she said. Boninfante said on Monday, Fare Free Transportation was not running and the drivers were being used to return Crest Haven residents as well as others. Boninfante said there are about 3,000 residents in nursing homes and assisted living facilities in Cape May County who were evacuated along with their caregivers, who numbered about two per resident, bringing the number of evacuees to 10,000. In addition, the county had

to evacuate about 80 inmates from the Cape May County Correctional Center to other, predetermined locations. The remaining inmates were secured in safe areas in the county facility. Boninfante said the county was taking away some good lessons from the evacuation. “One positive that came out of this is local and county emergency responders worked together, and they all had emergency plans,” she said. Boninfante said last Thursday Emergency Management Communications Center Director Frank McCall

repeated a fact often cited, that Cape May County is the sixth most difficult place to evacuate in the country. Despite that, she said all emergency responders took the hurricane very seriously and followed their emergency plans. “When we look at the process it was seamless,” she said. “There were no major problems reported as people were evacuating. If you look at this, it is the busy time of year for us and would be the worst time this could happen,” she said. Boninfante said the reports were there were 750,000 people in Cape May County the

prior weekend. She said if the same number of people were here on Aug. 26-27, then by Saturday most had left. She said they estimated only 12,000 remained in the county at that point. “We were able to carry out the evacuation without major problem at the busiest time of year,” she said. Boninfante credited county residents and visitors with heeding the mandatory evacuation order. She said when she left the EMCC at 10 p.m. Thursday night, there was already a steady stream of cars on Route 9 and on the Garden State Parkway, but everyone was patient and

they were waiting. She said when she left work on Friday, there was barely anyone on the road, and by Saturday the roads were virtually deserted. Although evacuation was the county’s first response to the hurricane, it set aside more than 80 buses from Middle and Lower Township school districts to transport residents to shelters. Residents were bused to the Woodbine Developmental Center, which was considered safe. Boninfante said at one point there were 700 people being sheltered at the Woodbine facility. About 400 were later transported to the

Poland Spring Arena in Toms River. Others were transported to shelters in Cumberland and Gloucester Counties. The county also opened a shelter of last resort at Middle Township Elementary School No. 2, for people who decided to stay but at the last minute needed sheltering. “It was not feasible under storm conditions to take them elsewhere,” Boninfante said. Boninfante said the first phase of the county’s operation was to make people safe, then to open up the roads, and finally to make sure people knew they could come back.

Worst

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Bay areas due to potential flooding. The major evacuation routes, he said, were the Highway 47-347-55 corridor or Route 50 off the Garden State Parkway to Highway 49. Heavy traffic congestion was expected in those areas, so he urged people to leave as soon as possible. McCall told reporters, since 1992, the Federal Emergency

Management Agency (FEMA) and others have designated Cape May County as the sixth most difficult place in the country to evacuate. “The irony is, out of the top 10, Cape May County is the only place that hasn’t experienced a direct hit,” McCall said. McCall said 1882 was the last time New Jersey experienced a direct hit from a hurricane.

McCall outlined plans to help elderly residents evacuate. He said there were already plans in place for the county to transport 160 residents from the Crest Haven Nursing Home. The county evacuated about 3,000 residents of nursing homes and assisted living facilities. The county urged all capable people to leave and take shelter with friends or relatives away from the storm. He asked people to take their pets with them. If they could not, caged

pets would be sheltered at the Cape May County Airport. More than 100 pets were sheltered there and cared for by volunteers.

CM Point resident returns to find tree hovering over house

By CAIN CHAMBERLIN
Cape May Star and Wave

Walter Greame, 91, at the corner of Lake and Oak, went with his son, Bob, to Andover, Sussex County on Friday evening in order to avoid the severe weather, which turned out to be worse in North Jersey. Bob said transformers were blown completely off the poles and rivers were rising incredibly high. “It’s crazy up there,” Bob said. “So many people still don’t have power.” When Bob drove Walter back to Cape May Point on Sunday night, they had no idea what they were in for. Walter said when they pulled in the driveway, his neighbor’s tree, which stood around 40 feet was leaning against his house. Luckily,

the tree did not cause any severe damage to the two-story house because its roots were still sturdy enough to support the tree. “We drove all over and didn’t see any problems, except for this,” he said. His neighbor was still not home as of yesterday, but his insurance agent was stopping by to take a look at the tree and see what could be done. Bob was not sure whether Walter or his neighbor would be responsible for removing the tree, but it certainly needed to be done quickly. “If we get another heavy rain or windstorm it will come down on the house completely,” he said.



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Shelter

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stayed on during the entire storm and the building sustained no damage. “Someone was smiling on us,” she said. “We were very fortunate.” She said no feedings or medication treatments were missed and all the animals were well taken care of during the storm, however they were pretty noisy during the peak of the storm. “It was a long weekend,” she said. “I’m just glad everyone made it through the storm okay and there were no serious problems in the area.”

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