

No Federal Aid Authorized For Storm, Erosion Damages

No federal help will be forthcoming to communities damaged by storm tides and erosion on New Year's Day, making insurance claims under the National Flood Insurance Program the only source of financial assistance.

According to Brunswick County Emergency Management Coordinator Cecil Logan, Gov. Jim Martin did not recommend a presidential declaration for the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The Town of Long Beach had been eyed as the most likely area in the county for a declaration.

A second agency from which more limited assistance might have been available, the Small Business Administration, said local damage was not severe enough to warrant an agency declaration.

To qualify, at least 25 homes or businesses would have had to sustain at least 40 percent uninsured losses.

"If the health department were to condemn all these houses because they don't have room for septic tanks, there might be a possibility," said Logan, of an SBA declaration.

That step would have to be initiated by Long Beach, he said.

Beach renourishment is also up to Long Beach. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has provided spoil from its routine dredging in Lockwood's Folly Inlet, but the federal government will not pay for additional dredging.

If the town and local property owners want to pay for additional sand, it would be cheaper to do it now while the Corps has a dredgeboat in the area and can dredge a slightly deeper channel for that purpose.

In a related move last week, the Coastal Resources Commission recommended revisions in the Federal Emergency Management

Agency's storm relief programs, especially the flood insurance program. It is based primarily on damage from single-event flooding, as occurs along rivers, rather than erosion that occurs over a period of time.

The CRC would like to see the flood insurance maps changed to reflect the fragility of dunes. They also want federal funds made readily available for purchase of storm-damaged property for public access. Property must be damaged several times under current policies before funds are made available.

Repeat claims make up approximately 40 percent of federal flood insurance payments.

While taxpayers must subsidize federal flood insurance, an Office of Coastal Management spokesman said the cost is less than costs associated with erosion and storm damage. In addition to the direct costs, it was added, are those of tax base losses and mobilizing emergency response teams such as the National Guard.

The CRC also approved several "loss prevention" recommendations, encouraging financial incentives for moving oceanfront homes to safer grounds.

Recommendations authored by

Melissa McCullough include:

- Establishing federal and state low-interest loan programs to aid oceanfront owners with relocation costs;
- Making the cost of relocating homes tax deductible;
- Using relocation programs as a way to obtain public beach access areas.

In a recent aerial survey by the Office of Coastal Management, she said, it appeared at least 325 homes and other structures in Brunswick, New Hanover, Pender and Onslow counties will lie seaward of the stable dune line in 10 years. The estimate is based on the average annual rate of erosion.

Better Fight Fat Than Risk Serious Disease

Does putting down the cigarettes mean putting on weight?

Weight gain can and often does occur when a person gives up smoking, so it's one of the excuses people give for continuing the habit.

But, according to Dr. Mike Bauerschmidt of the Brunswick Heart Association, "Putting on pounds need not be a consequence of putting down cigarettes. However,

you're better off giving them up."

He said you can develop action plans to avoid an expanded waistline by looking at these reasons many people gain weight at this time:

•Increased appetite: When you quit smoking, you may experience an increase in appetite because food tastes better. Since you no longer smoke after a meal, you may decide to have an extra helping or a dessert. Suggested counteractions are to cut food into smaller pieces to extend meal time, eat more slowly so you don't finish first, and get up from the table immediately after eating. Brush your teeth as a signal that you've stopped eating.

•Oral craving: You are accustomed to having a cigarette in your mouth, and food may become a replacement. Counteractions include carrying sugarless gum or mints, choosing food that requires effort to eat, and occupying your hands (instead of your mouth) with puzzles, gardening or home repairs.

•Snacking: Along with oral craving, the "munchies" is an insidious habit, so it's tempting to put food, rather than a cigarette, in your mouth. Instead, keep on hand a stock of raw vegetables, crackers, unbuttered popcorn or other low-calorie snack. Also, be conscious of when and where you snack; delay snack time and keep food out of sight.

•Social situations: You may find yourself in social situations where you ordinarily would have smoked, or where friends are smoking. To counteract, avoid these situations when you first quit smoking, substitute a walk for a coffee break, and try to break the pattern where food and drink precede or accompany smoking.

Is all this easier said than done? True, but increased consciousness of why you want to eat can help break the unconscious patterns established when you were a smoker.

"Picture a complete new image of yourself," Bauerschmidt suggests. "You can be smoke-free and maintain your weight."

PUBLIC MEETING

The public is invited to an open meeting Saturday, Jan. 31 at 4:00 PM at The Barn Restaurant on the Holden Beach Causeway.

The purpose of the meeting is to gather citizen input regarding the possible incorporation of an area north of the Town of Holden Beach, or the possible annexation of the same area by the Town of Holden Beach.

Sen. R.C. Soles will be present at this meeting. The public is cordially invited to attend.

Essay Contest Is Announced

Two high school students from Brunswick County can earn an all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C., June 13 through 19.

This is the prize for winners of the annual essay contest sponsored by Brunswick Electric Membership Corp. The competition is open to high school juniors, who can submit a 200- to 300-word essay to their guidance counselors. The subject is electricity, but English teachers will assign specific titles, according to Philip Morgan, member services representative for BEMC.

"I'll be giving audio slide presentations in all the high schools about this in a couple of weeks," Morgan said.

The deadline for essays to reach his office from guidance counselors is March 9.

The two county winners, along with two winners from Columbus County, will join delegates from 38 states, all called Youth Tourists. In Washington they will participate in educational seminars on government and rural electrification.

They will also meet with members of their congressional delegation on Capitol Hill, visit historical sites and enjoy cultural and social activities of Washington.

Winners are eligible to compete for a \$1,000 scholarship on the national level.

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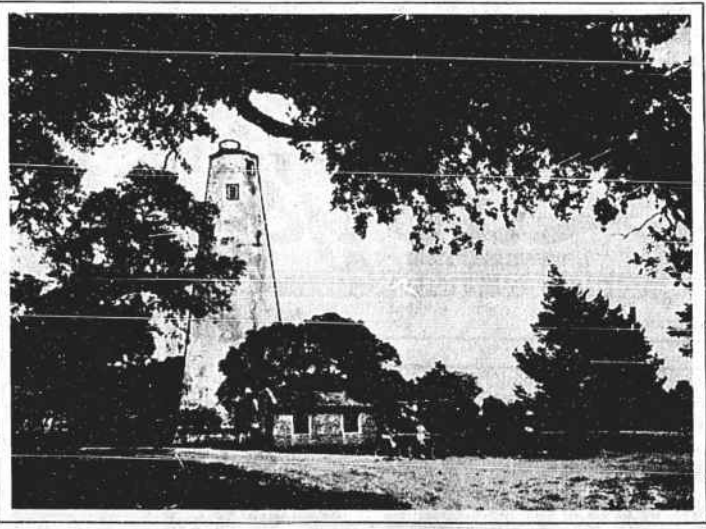
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