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Town, County get ready for Isabel

BY TAMIKA SPRUILL
Staff Writer

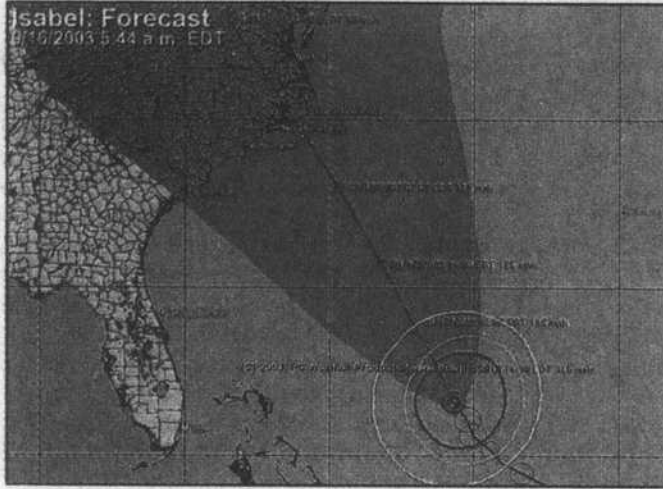
Town of Edenton and Chowan County officials began preparing for the projected arrival of Hurricane Isabel Monday, all the while hoping that the efforts "will not be needed come Wednesday or Thursday," according to Edenton Town Manager Anne-Marie Knighton.

"EMS Director Doug Belch called for a briefing of all town, county and regional allied agencies Monday afternoon," Knighton said. "Traditionally, this group gathers when severe weather warnings are issued."

Knighton said that the group "will likely meet Tuesday afternoon, and then several times early Wednesday. Decisions regarding the opening of shelters, the possible evacuation of flood-prone neighborhoods will likely be made

sometime early Wednesday morning."

As of Monday afternoon, Town and County officials were getting word of predictions that storm surge in the Albemarle Sound could be of historical proportions. "Tuesday evening will be a critical



Hurricane Isabel approaches the Carolina coast

time for decisions regarding actions needed to protect our citizens," said County Manager Cliff Copeland.

"We urge everyone to take heed of these warnings that are being issued and be prepared," added Town Manager Anne-Marie Knighton. "Our department heads are reviewing our hurricane prepared-

ness plan; we will be ready if the storm hits."

Departments are testing equipment, especially chain saws, emergency generators and the like, Knighton said. "A crew is cleaning catch basins. All our vehicles have been gassed up."

Knighton noted that state officials have been in touch with Edenton's airport to ask about the possibility of purchasing aviation fuel during a recovery effort. "NCDOT leases their office space from our town at the airport and they recently installed an emergency generator, so if the state needs fuel, we will be able to service the aircraft," she said.

Local residents are reminded to call 482-4414 to report any power outages experienced as a result of the hurricane. "We don't want to overload the 911 Central Communications System with non-emergency calls," she explained. "We will have personnel at the

Electric Department to answer calls."

Knighton also reported that she had been in touch with ElectricCities, the organization that administers the Public Power Emergency Assistance Program. "Usually, we are the ones sending our guys to other communities to help restore power after a disaster strikes," she said. "Hopefully, that will be the case with Hurricane Isabel but if we do have trouble, we know who to call for help."



At photo on left, Chowan County EMS Director Doug Belch, left, talks with Dr. Allan Smith, Superintendent of the Edenton-Chowan Schools, during a special meeting Monday where town and county officials discussed plans for dealing with Hurricane Isabel. In the photo on the right, town employee Chris Jackson removes the flags from downtown Edenton as town braces for Isabel. (Staff photo by Tamika Spruill)



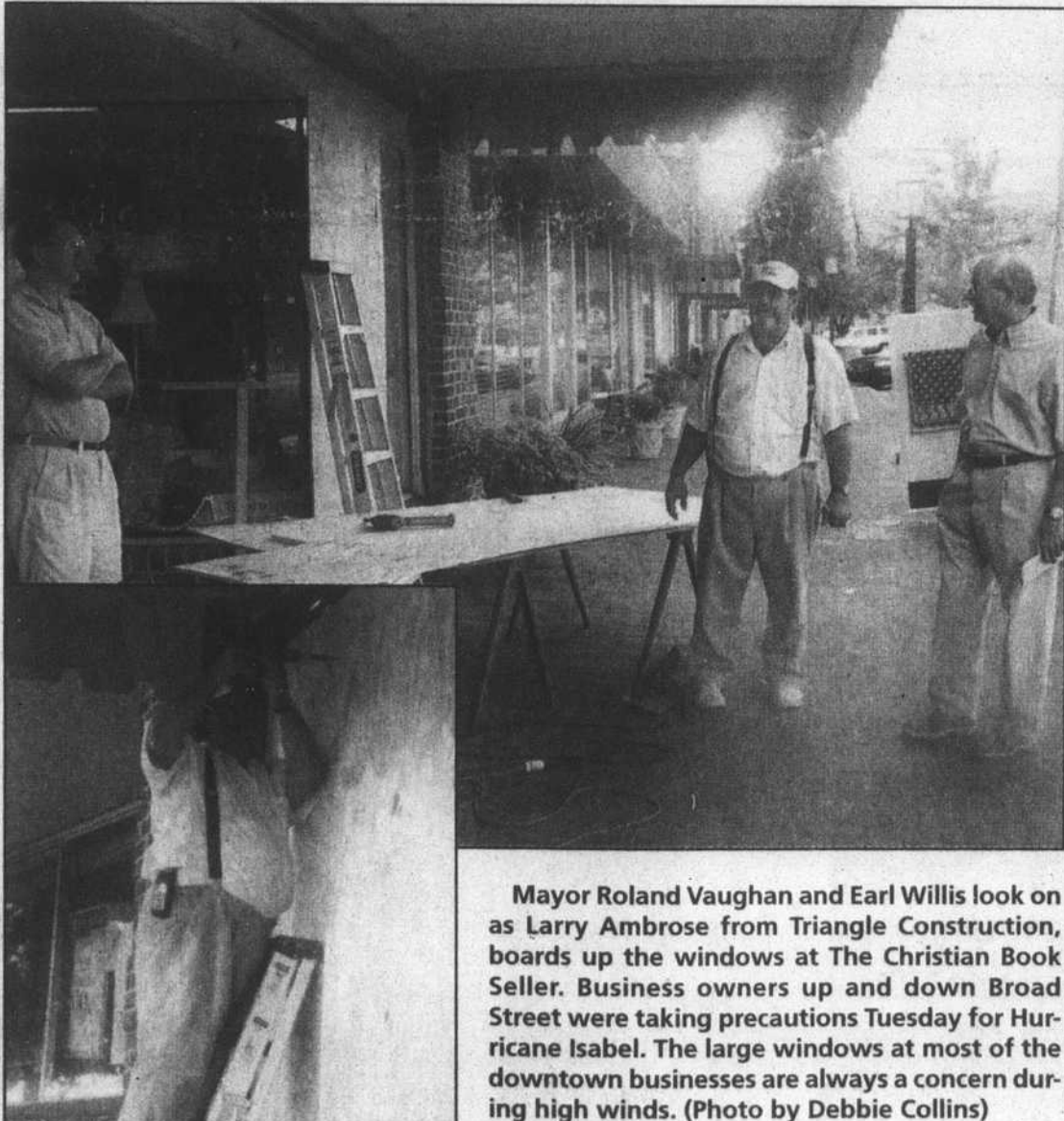
Many events altered

(Editor's Note: The following are notices of changes in scheduled events due to the approaching hurricane that the Chowan Herald had received by press-time.)

Friends of Chowan Hospital's Rock Around the Clock dinner and dance at Nixon's Catering has been rescheduled for November 14th. The current tickets you hold will be honored for the same event at the same place. Call 482-6336 or 482-1932 for more information.

Albemarle Crisis Pregnancy Center's Walk for Life 2003 will not be held on Saturday, September 20, 2003 due to the threat of Hurricane Isabel. They ask that all recruiters collect pledge forms and donations from their walkers and turn them into one of the center offices. Special hours will be set for Tuesday and Wednesday.

See EVENTS On Page 3-A



Mayor Roland Vaughan and Earl Willis look on as Larry Ambrose from Triangle Construction, boards up the windows at The Christian Book Seller. Business owners up and down Broad Street were taking precautions Tuesday for Hurricane Isabel. The large windows at most of the downtown businesses are always a concern during high winds. (Photo by Debbie Collins)

National Guard ready to roll if needed

The North Carolina National Guard has a pool of 3,500 soldiers and airmen on standby and another more than 1,500 available to respond to the state's needs if and when Hurricane Isabel comes ashore.

"Some published reports would lead people to believe that we are undermanned and unprepared, and that is simply not the case," said Maj. Gen. William E. Ingram Jr., commander of the North Carolina National Guard. "Despite our commitments here in the United States and overseas, we have more than enough people and equipment to serve the people of North Carolina in the event of a natural disaster."

The North Carolina National Guard has about 12,000 soldiers and airmen in its ranks. Right now, about 1,800 of them are on federal active duty either here in the United States or overseas. Another 4,500, the soldiers of the 30th Heavy Separate Brigade headquartered in Clinton, NC, are on alert for possible mobilization in the coming weeks. That leaves a surplus of more than 5,000 personnel for responding to other contingencies, including natural disasters. The alert of the 30th has led to many of the questions about the Guard's ability to respond to a state emergency.

"The mobilization of the 30th is having no impact on the Guard's ability to meet my needs in terms of disaster response," said Dr. Ken Taylor, director of the North Carolina Division of Emergency Management (NCEM). "We work together on a regular basis. I know their execution of whatever mission we call them to perform will be outstanding."

Local shelter sites

Chowan County officials said Monday that if the need arises John A. Holmes High School and Chowan Middle School would open late Wednesday afternoon to serve as emergency shelters for our community.

A pet-friendly shelter will be open at the Old Walker School Gym (now the Recreation Center). Opening times will be announced Wednesday on local radio stations and television channels. Pet owners will need to bring current vaccination and rabies records, carriers with a secure door and a muzzle if the animal is aggressive. All animals will be examined upon entry and registration will take place at the shelter. For more information please call 482-8431.

Red Cross rules and regulations are still applicable (no alcohol, firearms or smoking) for all shelters.

For more information call the Emergency Management Services office at 482-4365 or visit the Chowan County website at town-ofedenton.com.

Decision to be made Wed. afternoon on school closings

By Angela Perez
Staff Writer

As of noon Tuesday, Edenton-Chowan Schools planned to have a regular school day on Wednesday. Administrators plan to meet by the end of Wednesday's school day to determine whether or not school will be canceled on Thursday and Friday. "Of course, we do have plans and procedures," said Dr. Allan Smith, superintendent of Edenton-Chowan Schools, "on how best to deal with natural disasters such as hurricanes. We are working with school administrators and our maintenance department to anticipate problems. We are working through the planning process at this time."

Smith went on to stress how all local government

and assistance agencies were working together at this time. "The school is an integral part of the community at large and so we are involved in area response and how best to determine what we should all do. That is if the storm does hit."

Edenton-Chowan School administrators are staying in close contact with local Emergency Medical Services. EMS is providing periodic updates and having daily meetings with school administrators as they track the storm.

Smith went on to add, "Right now we are all at the mercy of Isabel."

School cancellations will be announced on local radio and TV stations, as well as the Chowan County School's website homepage (www.ecps.k12.nc.us).

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CENTER HILL CROSS ROADS FIRE DEPARTMENT ANNIVERSARY SUPPER FIRE HOUSE CHICKEN SAT., SEPT. 20 4 PM - 7 PM \$6.00 per plate