

(Reprinted from the Bertie Ledger Advance, Wednesday, September 22, 1999)

Faces in the flood are more than just statistics

By JEANETTE WHITE

WINDSOR - The best way to feel the pain caused in this town by Hurricane Floyd was to look at the faces of people without flood insurance.

And almost no one had the insurance because none expected to live through what is being called a 500-year flood.

Because travel through the town was cut off by rising water, those who live one side of town could only see what was happening there.

On U.S. 17 North, the river overran. Cashie River Bridge, closing the intersection to traffic on U.S. 17 North and U.S. 13-

rents made it hazardous for anyone to be moving.

First rescue priority was given to humans, then efforts were made to move animals which had been left behind.

Motors on the small boats strained to fight strong current caused by water flowing so rapidly. As boats traveled toward Windsor, logs from a nearby sawmill shot across the water. But luckily, none of the boats and logs reached the intersection at the same time. If they had, there would have been no way to stop the boats.

One family living in a house with a second floor chose not to leave their home Thursday

to the center.

Trucks and buses were used to get residents, staff, medication and all needed equipment to Windsor Elementary School, where they remained overnight before they were taken back to the center.

One resident, who was in her 90s, died following the evacuation. Officials said her passing would be classified as a hurricane death.

Brian Center Health and Retirement sits beside U.S. 17 on higher ground and was not evacuated, but some patients were moved to the hospital for safety sake.

One couple living in the area behind Roy's Service Center said water rose so quickly that they only had time to throw a few things in two suitcases. Friday she was asking rescue workers to go after her dogs. When a boat was able to return, they returned with her animals and several others happy to see a human face.

Owners of a horse on Water Street stabled the mare in the garage before water rose so high they had to get the animal out and there was no way to get to higher ground.

The woman rode bareback as the mare swam from Water Street to Pittman's Pharmacy on Granville Street, where a trailer picked the horse up and took her to a pasture.

"If it had been any other horse, she would have died," the woman said Monday.

Some of the animals at Livermon Park and Mini-Zoo were freed to seek higher ground and Park Director Wayne Hill has been praised for saving them. Some residents saw such strange sights as an emu running down Granville

Street,

It was rumored that both buffalo died, but they were saved by Hill's efforts. One Llama died of pneumonia after the storm passed.

Still no one was prepared for what they saw when the water dropped and they were able to get to the business district Sunday and Monday. Every store and office on King Street was flooded except Bertie County Courthouse. Most businesses on Granville Street flooded.

Sidewalks and streets soon filled with wet debris as the massive cleanup effort began. Trash trucks began collecting debris all over town.

A boat which appeared to have come from a near by sales center was high and dry in a yard some distance away.

Many residents and business owners began looking for alternate work and living sites because properties will remain uninhabitable until repairs are made.

But the storm also brought out the best in people.

J. C. Simmons of Green's Cross purchased an outdoor cooker recently, but never had a chance to try it out. He and his brother-in-law, Joe Thomas, Jr., thought about their freezers full of quickly-thawing food. The two men took the food and cooker where rescue

workers were docked at Heritage House Restaurant and cooked for anyone who wanted to eat. Spare ribs, chicken, pork chops and neckbones soon disappeared.

Congresswoman Eva M. Clayton was among the entourage which visited Tarboro with President Bill Clinton Monday afternoon.

In her comments to the public via television, the congresswoman urged patience until federal and state agencies can provide relief. She also spoke of neighbor helping neighbor.

"We will get through this together...so let's turn it into something very positive," Congresswoman Clayton said.

Food from the freezer and a new cooker were used to feed whoever wanted it . . .

17 South on Thursday The bridge was not reopened until Monday at 7 a.m.

Water from the river backed up to Heritage House, where water was above the handrail. The parking lot was used to launch rescue boats.

Home and businesses on both sides of the road were underwater Friday morning except for a handful which sit on high ground.

Emergency personnel, the National Guard and others worked through Thursday night moving people from their homes to safety. Large National Guard trucks, called 6 by 6s, were used until water was so high even they could not get through.

Rescue efforts were suspended for a few hours about 1 a.m. Friday because strong cur-

rent night. Friday morning the husband fired a shot into the air to get attention and began calling for help. The boat which responded returned with the husband, wife, daughter, two dogs and a bird.

Hallmark Center sits on a knoll off U.S. 17 and was not swamped, but as water continued to rise, it was decided that residents had to be evacuated, including those from a coastal sister facility who had been brought to Windsor a couple of days earlier.

But several feet of water stood on the street between the center and U.S. 17.

The NC Forest Service and National Guard laid a temporary bridge from a yard on U.S. 17, across a high field where the new Bertie Memorial Hospital will be built and




We Want To Have A Word With You - THANKS! Windsor Fire Department



Flood waters, debris, and wind damage left from Hurricane Floyd makes restoration an unbalanced situation.

The Roanoke Electric Cooperative's board of directors, management, and employees would like to thank all of its members for their patience and endurance during the service restoration period in the aftermath of Hurricane Floyd. Many of you showed true illustrations of kindness whether it was by preparing food for the crews, helping move tree limbs, or just offering words of encouragement. Also a big thanks to the construction crews that assisted with the restoration process (Bluegrass Energies of KY, Fort Loudoun Electric Co-op, Richardson Construction Co., Bartlett Tree Expert Co.), the N.C. Department of Transportation, local law enforcement, area Emergency Planning Departments, area restaurants that provided meals, all sources of the media, and the general public for their understanding and collaboration. This most recent contact with "Mother Nature" unfortunately brings catastrophic times to the area, but your spirit of cooperation helps us all through them.



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RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Bertie County Commissioners would like to thank the volunteers for all of their kindness and dedication in helping the Hurricane Floyd and Hurricane Irene victims, and

WHEREAS, the Bertie County Commissioners would also like to thank the surrounding counties for all of their support during our time of need; and

WHEREAS, the Board would like to recognize the individuals and organizations throughout the County that worked many hours to help the community to recover from this ordeal; and

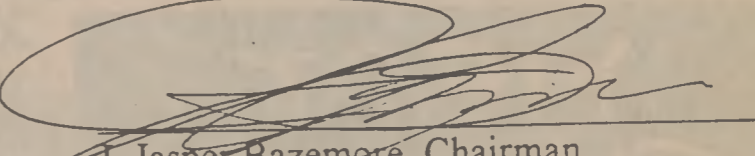
WHEREAS, the Board would like to express their sorrow for the loss that hurricane victims have incurred; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Board of Commissioners of Bertie County that they would like to express their gratitude for the kindness and dedication of the volunteers and organizations from this community as well as surrounding counties.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Commissioners of Bertie County wish to express their sorrow for the loss that the citizens of Bertie County have incurred during Hurricane Floyd and Hurricane Irene.

Adopted by the Board of Commissioners of Bertie County on the 16th day of November, 1999.

Witness our hands and the official seal of Bertie County, this the 16th day of November, 1999.



J. Jasper Bazemore, Chairman
Bertie County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST;
Jack Williford
Clerk to the Board