

The Perquimans Weekly

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Bonnie visits Perquimans

Storm damage estimates exceed \$2.5 million

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

Bonnie didn't make her presence known for extended periods, but the hurricane left estimated damages of over \$2.5 million in her wake in Perquimans County after blowing out Thursday night with wind gusts of up to 95 miles per hour.

County Emergency Management Coordinator Ray Cullipher said Tuesday that tornadoes were reported in the county around 11 p.m. Thursday. Cullipher said he saw one while he was out after receiving a report of a tornado touch-down. Most seemed to stay up high, causing little damage on the ground, he said.

It appears that the cotton and corn crops suffered the worst damage from the storm that hit the southern coast of North Carolina Tuesday and took its sweet time rolling to the northeast. Cullipher said initial estimates he received from the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service, Perquimans Center put cotton damage at close to \$1.5 million, with expected corn losses of \$600,000.

Some cotton fields looked as if steam rollers had flattened the crops, Cullipher said.

Farmers raced Tuesday evening to pick as much corn as possible before wind-whipped rain reached the county.

At present, Cullipher said it appears that the peanut and soybean crops are salvageable.

The most extensive damage to property reported to Cullipher to date occurred in New Hope, where a suspected tornado ripped the roofs off of two mobile homes. One was unoccupied, but the family in the other was at home when the roof was literally ripped from over their heads.

"Basically, they lost everything they had," Cullipher said.

With no insurance,



PHOTO BY SUSAN HARRIS

Trees falling over power lines caused electrical outages across Perquimans County as Hurricane Bonnie made her presence known last week. Crop losses accounted for the greatest majority of the estimated \$2.5 million in damages suffered in Perquimans County. Emergency Management Coordinator Ray Cullipher said the extension service has estimated cotton loss at about \$1.5 million, with corn losses expected to total about \$600,000. Other property damage reported is estimated at around \$500,000.

Cullipher said the family is living with family. The Red Cross was notified of the situation, and is seeking financial assistance for the family.

Other than the roofs, Cullipher said only minor damage has been reported, mostly that due to downed limbs.

Cullipher said from his contacts with area insurance companies, it appears that property damage to homes and businesses is about \$500,000.

A disaster team visited the county Monday. Cullipher and Sheriff Ralph Robinson traveled the county with the team. Cullipher said the team indicated that Perquimans County might qualify for disaster

relief. So that a better estimate of damages can be tallied, Cullipher said that anyone whose property was damaged by the storm should call t h e

"Everybody in the county, as far as all our agencies are concerned, pulled together and worked real good. I think everything went real smooth."

Kim Adams
Perquimans County Emergency Management Coordinator

county qualifies for aid. "The biggest problem we've having with damages is people reporting it to their insurance companies, but not to us," Cullipher said. "We're having to go look for it."

Cullipher said the only

flooding reported during the storm was on the causeway and on Edenton Road Street at Jenny's gut. The causeway was closed down for about 3 hours Wednesday night due to debris washing over from the river, reopened, then closed again on Thursday, Cullipher said.

Edenton Road Street in front of the Perquimans County High School campus was closed for a couple of hours Thursday around noon when Jenny's Gut spilled over its banks.

A shelter was opened at Perquimans Middle School Tuesday around 6:30 p.m. and remained open until Thursday at 7 p.m. when Cullipher said all the occupants chose to return home.

Over 100 people sought shelter, many as a result of the mandatory evacuation of mobile home parks ordered by the Town of Hertford. The shelter was staffed by the Red Cross, Department of Social Services employees and school

system personnel, Cullipher said. Assistance at the shelter was provided by the Rescue Squad, Winfall Fire Department and all three county law enforcement agencies.

In addition, Cullipher said the county fire departments did an outstanding job of surveying the county and removing limbs and other debris from the roadway so that if needed, emergency vehicles could pass.

"Everybody in the county, as far as all our agencies are concerned, pulled together and worked real good," Cullipher said. "I think everything went real smooth."

Cullipher said the county was lucky with Bonnie and it looks as if Danielle is turning away, but people still need to prepare when storm warnings are issued.

At a Hurricane Conference in February, Cullipher said the National Weather Service predicted that three major storms will hit this area during this hurricane season.

Hurricane leaves some county residents in the dark for hours

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

Hurricane Bonnie blew trees over power lines and substations, leaving several areas in Perquimans County in the dark for hours.

Albemarle Electric Membership Cooperation spokesperson Larry Johnson said Tuesday that the company's most critical problem in Perquimans County came in the Bethel Township, where a transmission line coming into an EMC substation from N.C. Power was torn down by a fallen tree. The substation destruction left the communities of Snug Harbor, Holiday Island and Albemarle Plantation in the dark for about 20 hours, Johnson said.

According to Johnson, the Bethel subdivisions lost power around 11 p.m. Thursday and were without electricity until about 8 p.m. Friday.

Because of the location of the downed line, Johnson said special equipment had to be brought in from another area to fix the damage. In addition, poles and cross arms had to be set. Johnson said N.C. Power and EMC crews worked together to restore electrical service as soon as possible.

There were also scattered outages during the storm resulting from fallen trees and

limbs in Snug Harbor, Holiday Island and New Hope.

In order to restore power faster, local EMC employees were on duty almost around the clock, Johnson said. In addition, 10 crews from EMCs in Piedmont, Roanoke, Edgecombe-Martin, and Halifax were brought in and independent contractors hired.

Johnson said the EMC staff is grateful to customers who called in with specific locations of downed lines as well as outages. That information assisted in getting crews on location and electrical service restored more efficiently, Johnson said.

North Carolina Power officials could not be reached, however residents in the Woodland Church community served by the power company reported an extended outage. Residents said their electricity went off around 3:45 p.m. Thursday when a tree fell on power lines in a swampy area near the intersection of Woodland Church Road and U.S. Highway 17. Service was not restored until 4:30 p.m. Saturday.

Some residents lost food in freezers and refrigerators, resident Sherie Cartwright said. Cartwright added that those with generators were very generous in loaning generators to others to try to stop food spoilage.

Bonnie botches school opening

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

Bonnie played havoc with the first week of school, cancelling classes systemwide for two days, sending one school home on Friday and postponing athletic contests.

Superintendent Gregory Todd said Tuesday that the hurricane interrupted what began last Monday as a good opening week.

"We had a very good opening week," Todd said. "I was very pleased with it. Students, teachers were enthusiastic, energetic."

Then came the storm. With weather forecasters predicting 5-10 inches of rain in the area along with hurricane force winds, administrators cancelled classes on Wednesday. Bonnie's slow-down over southeastern North Carolina led to a second missed day on Thursday.

When classes resumed Friday, a problem with a North Carolina Power transformer sent Central School students back home for a third day. The three other schools were able to attend classes.

Todd said he expects to

make a recommendation on when the missed days will be made up at the board's next regular meeting, scheduled for Sept. 20. While the original school calendar called for making up a missed day on Labor Day, Todd said the system will not use that day as a make-up day.

Central School students will have to make up the time they lost Friday, but Todd said the system will explore ways to make up the time other than having the students attend school an extra day.

No damages to school build-

ings have been discovered Todd said, although there were some trees on school properties that sustained damages.

The storm had contractors at Hertford Grammar and Central schools moving and securing materials, Todd said.

The superintendent said he is unsure what affect delays caused by the storm will have on moving into the new parts of Hertford Grammar School tentatively set for this weekend. A walk-through inspection set last month by the school board will take place Thursday as scheduled.

Outside

THURSDAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY	
High: 90s	Low: 70s	High: 90s	Low: 70s	High: 90s	Low: 70s
CHANCE OF RAIN		CHANCE OF RAIN		CHANCE OF RAIN	