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Tornado hits Durants Neck Property spared, crops in question

Twister rips through homes

JEREMY DESPOSITO
The Daily Advance

At least three homes in the Durants Neck community were hit by a tornado during Hurricane Floyd's approach last Wednesday night.

According to Emergency Management Coordinator Ray Cullipher, the tornado flew off the Albemarle Sound, hitting two homes on Soundside Drive around 11:30 p.m. before ripping into another on New Hope Road.

The twister took a garage door off a waterfront home, crossed the street and destroyed another, then ripped the end off a doublewide mobile home on New Hope Road. Luckily, neither of the homeowners of the severely damaged properties were at home at the time. No injuries were reported.

Jeff and RoseAnn White were at their current home in Hampton, Va. They had left their doublewide home on New Hope Road last Sunday. It's a part-time residence to which they were waiting to retire.

The Whites didn't see the damage until they arrived Thursday afternoon. Their first priority was salvaging family photos and anything else they could find.

From outside the home, clothes could be seen still hanging in a bedroom closet. Toothbrushes still hung in their place by the bathroom



A tornado touched down in the Durants Neck area of Perquimans County late last Wednesday night, damaging three houses. Among those damaged properties was the doublewide mobile home of Jeff and RoseAnn White. The right front wall was ripped from the home, exposing clothes hanging in the closet.

sink, but the roof was on top of a mattress on the floor. The right quarter of the home was pulled wide open and walls were sitting on top of the roof.

In addition, parts of the broken brick foundation lay 20 feet from the house in the grass. Other items from the mobile home were scattered up to 50 yards away, in a rough line pointing in the direction of the tornado's path.

Neighbor Laurie Zeiner heard the tornado touch down. She's thankful her neighbor sweren't home.

"When you see the house, nobody could survive it," she said.

Zeiner and her husband ran to the front of their house when they heard the sound.

"I want to say (it sounded like) a freight train," she said.

"I hope I never hear that sound in my life again.

"My husband literally saw the back wall come in two inches. (The tornado) lasted five seconds."

The frightening part of watching the tornado hit, Zeiner said, wasn't the wind howling so much as it was the uncertainty.

"When you see how destructive they are... I hope it never happens again. I felt sick (for our neighbors). Everybody feels bad for them."

When they saw the damage, the Whites also were sick at heart.

"I'm depressed," said Rose Ann White. "The stuff I brought down here I collected ... pictures of my son from first to sixth grade. It's just depressing."

"We'll wait to see what happens with insurance," Jeff White said. "That's the road we have to follow."

Ironically, the Whites had stayed in New Hope during Hurricane Dennis. They felt fortunate to be elsewhere Wednesday night.

"We come down here every other week," he said. "I was hoping to retire and come here."

A wood-frame house on Soundside Road, just around the corner, received the worst damage. The owners' son, a volunteer fireman with the Newbold Fire Department in Pasquotank County, notified his parents of the damage Thursday afternoon.

"We're just picking up the pieces," Keith Yezdanian said. "(The house) is gone. There's

not much we can do."

In his eight months with the fire department, he's never seen any fire damage close to what his parents' house looked like after the tornado, he said.

It was lifted off its foundation. The front deck was intact, but the house was pushed back about 10 feet. One shed was detached from its foundation, and parts of another shed were everywhere. Pieces of the roof could be found as far as 500 feet into a cornfield behind the house. Inside, only two framed pictures and some furniture were salvageable under the broken glass.

"I've never seen anything like this," said Yezdanian, who lived in the house a year ago with his wife, Joeline, and his daughter, Jessika, 2. "The wind got so bad it actually beat hole in the wall. We just got a concrete driveway put in; this is what my parents get to come home to."

Yezdanian's parents were to retire here in two months. They saw the damage on Saturday.

"Everything that meant anything to them, they brought down here," he said. "We were able to salvage some photo albums of me and my brother growing up. Dad had a lot of NASCAR race collectibles. Mom had porcelain valuables."

His father, a private investigator in New York, has owned the property for about 10 years, building the house slowly until its completion a year ago.

"They'll most likely stay with us (for now)," Yezdanian said. "Dad put his heart into it. He was really into his house. He gets choked up every once in a while, but he's holding his own."

Property spared, crops in question

SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

Unlike some counties in eastern North Carolina, Perquimans went about its business Friday.

Emergency Management Coordinator Ray Cullipher said the tornado damages in the Durants Neck area and three Ferry Road houses with water in the them were the only major damages to homes reported to him last Friday. In addition, Larry's Drive-In at the foot of the causeway reported 6-8 inches of water inside.

Cullipher said the causeway, the street through Cedar Wood Cemetery, and Edenton Road Street by the high school were closed most of Wednesday night and into Thursday due to high water. There were other flooded roads scattered throughout the county, but most were passable. Only Perry's Bridge in Belvidere remained closed into this week.

There were also a few trees down, and electric service was interrupted temporarily in some areas.

Cullipher and other emergency officials met Wednesday to discuss the approaching Hurricane Floyd. He said Perquimans was facing the possibility of hurricane force winds and a high probability of tornadoes along with storm surges and heavy rain.

Not wanting to take any chances, emergency management officials declared a state of emergency Wednesday at 2 p.m. and began evacuation of low-lying areas and mobile homes. A shelter opened at Perquimans Middle School at 4 p.m. A curfew of 9 p.m. was established to get residents off of roads.

Fire departments in each area patrolled Wednesday night, checking for flooded roads and other problems. About 70 people went to the shelter.

While the county escaped the devastating property damage that hit much of eastern North Carolina, farmers will likely be hit hard by the water left behind by both Dennis and Floyd. North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service-Perquimans Center Director Lewis Smith said Tuesday that it is hard to determine at this point exactly what to expect from the water, but losses could be in the millions of dollars.

Corn already had ear disease problems before the storms, and the water and delay in harvesting will cause reduced quality, Smith said.

Problems had also been discovered with boll rot prior to the storms. Cotton needs sun to mature and the rain is delaying maturity. The longer the crop stays undetached and in the field, the more problems boll rot could cause, he said.

The soggy soil will affect peanuts, but how much is unknown at this time, Smith said. Soybeans are not as critical at this point as are the other three crops, he added.

Adult day services week proclaimed in state

Governor Jim Hunt has proclaimed Sept. 19-25 as "Adult Day Services Week: Honoring Our Past, Creating Our Future." The week honors the over 100 adult day service programs in 68 North Carolina counties, such as Day Break Adult Day Health Care Center in Elizabeth City.

As part of long-term continuing care for older and disabled adults, the Adult Day Health Care Services of the N.C. Division of Aging offer the opportunity for an impaired adult to become involved, sharing the day with others, in a safe, supervised environment. There is an opportunity for group involvement and individually planned services

and activities director toward stabilization or improvement of the disabled and older Adults. The primary caregivers have the opportunity to remain employed while their loved one is cared for in a secure and healthy environment.

Adult Day Health Care Services have grown in North Carolina from two programs in 1973 to over 100 today. On any given weekdays, more than 2,500 people attend an adult day care program in the state. At Day Break, participants enjoy a personalized plan or care and a program of physical, social, cultural, and craft activities, specializing in a nurturing environment for those adults who might otherwise be unable to participate in the community due to frailty or disability. Together with the participant, the family and the Day Break staff manage chronic illnesses and prevent or postpone nursing home placement.

Recognizing the value of adult day care services, the 1999 session of the North Carolina General Assembly appropriated \$250,000 for start-up grants for up to ten new adult day service programs. Chowan County has received start-up funding through the N.C. Division of Aging and through the generous support of the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust, plans are being formulated to construct an adult day health care center in Edenton based on the Day Break Model.

For additional information, Julia Morse, RN, Day Break Adult Day Health Care Coordinator, can be reached at 338-4375. Day Break is located in Edgewood Center, 1407 Parkview Drive, Elizabeth City.

ALS softball tournament moves to Winfall fields

A softball tournament to raise funds for the Jim "Catfish" Hunter ALS Foundation will move to Perquimans County.

Originally set to be played in Gates, the tournament was moved early this week because of the extensive flooding in parts of that county. Joan Riddick, one of the tournament organizers, said Monday that the hurricane may also change the number of teams entering the men's tournament. Teams from Hertford County may not be able to play because of the devastating losses in that area.

Still, Rountree is hopeful that the event will be a success.

"I'm trying to get everything donated so that every penny we make can go to ALS," Rountree said. "Even if we don't make a whole lot of money, everything will help."

The tournament is set to begin Friday evening at 6:30. Play will resume on Saturday at 10 a.m. A highlight of the tournament will be an exhibition game between members of the Hunter family and WVEC TV on Saturday at 2 p.m.

The entry fee is \$200 per team, with the first eight teams to contact Rountree at Jeff Winslow accepted.

In addition to team fees, organizers are accepting business and individual donations. Concessions will be sold to raise more funds.

For information on the tournament, call Rountree at 357-0597 or Winslow at 357-0534.

Victim assistance

Efforts to help victims of Hurricane Floyd are underway. Those who have been received that churches sent needed items to neighbors in hard-hit counties.

Items needed include water, blankets, pillows, canned food, baby items, personal hygiene products, cleaning supplies and canned foods. No cash are being accepted at this time.

Nixon at Albemarle reports that several businesses have joined forces to gather items for transport to Bertie and possibly other counties. Items may be taken to The Mail, Tommy's Pizza, Computer or Copeland Communications, where they will be held until shipment Thursday. Bert Dail of Hertford Company will provide transportation.

Ford Baptist Church is serving as a drop-off point for items to storm victims. Items will be dropped off at the church Friday, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Donor Vaughan also said items are needed. Call the church at 357-9221 for details. The church is coordinated with the Baptist State Convention. Contributions to the Cross Disaster Relief Fund are still being accepted.

WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY
High: 70s
Low: 50s
CLEAR

FRIDAY
High: 70s
Low: 50s
SUNNY

SATURDAY
High: 70s
Low: 50s
PARTLY CLOUDY