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PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

35 cents

Schools set 7 make-up days

SUSAN R. HARRIS

Students will now attend school on Oct. 10, Oct. 13, Nov. 15., Nov. 26, Dec. 19, Dec. 22 and Feb. 6.

The Board of Education approved a revised calendar Friday afternoon during their annual retreat to provide the seven make-up days lost during Hurricane Isabel.

It also provides the required optional, required and annual leave days for staff as proscribed by law.

Oct. 10, Oct. 13, Nov. 26, Dec. 19 and Feb. 6 were formerly teacher work days, while Dec. 22 was an annual leave day. Nov. 15 is a Saturday.

The March 12 optional work day is now a required work day. Jan. 2 was an optional work day and is now an annual leave day. June 3, 4 and 7 were "out of school" days and are now optional work days.

The schools closed because of lack of water and electricity, and also because it took several days to clear all roads to make it possible for buses to pass through to transport students.

In addition, the schools had repairs and clean-up to do before students could return.

Assistant Superintendent Dwayne Stallings reviewed damages in the schools with members of the N.C. Public Health Department Patricia Gilmartin, Mike Reid and Val Murphy on Sept. 25. The group was shown all areas in schools where water entered the building. They gave suggestions on items to handle and followed up with a report to Superintendent Ken Wells.

Stallings said that the school system immediately corrected the problems cited before allowing students to return to those areas.

At Central School, recommendations included replacing water-damaged tiles and cleaning vents throughout the school.

Three rooms at Hertford Grammar School were damaged. Clean-up in those rooms included cleaning furniture, replacing water-damaged ceiling tiles, shampooing carpets and cleaning water from light fixtures.

The middle school sustained the most significant damage. Work had to be done in six classrooms and two hallways. Ceiling tile replacement, steam cleaning carpets, taking down boards on walls and cleaning them, and circulating air in the rooms were among the suggestions there.

At the high school, baseboards moldings were pulled up, insulation was dried out, ceiling tiles were replaced, and carpets were cleaned.



Firefighters from all county departments were invited to Monday night's county commissioners meeting to be thanked by the county for their hard work during preparation and recovery efforts associated with Hurricane Isabel. Firefighters were a tremendous asset to the communities they serve, comprising the front line in tree removal from roads and their stations served as distribution centers for water and ice. Some stations also served as feeding sites.

Firefighters thanked

Volunteer firefighters imperative to storm recovery

SUSAN R. HARRIS

Firefighters earned accolades from county commissioners Monday night for the vital role they played in recovery efforts immediately after Isabel.

"Ya'll stepped up to the plate and just, really, really responded in a stellar way," Commissioners Chairman Wallace Nelson told the firefighters who attended Monday night's meeting.

Nelson said the volunteers modeled Christ-like behavior in the community, and are always there to help in so many ways.

Firefighters began clearing roads immediately after the storm passed, and distributed ice and water to all communities through their fire stations.

Commissioners Shirley Wiggins and Tammy Miller-White both thanked the firefighters for going out of their way to help senior citizens and for their graciousness during such a difficult time.

Miller-White said she was touched and impressed with the teamwork and leadership shown by firefighters.

Commissioner Ben Hobbs said he lives within site of the Bethel Fire Department, and he saw activity there for several days.

Bethel Fire Chief Jeff Proctor responded that one firefighter took off over a week of leave from his job to assist with recovery.

Emergency Management Coordinator Harry Winslow said he knew all during the preparation and recovery period that firefighters would be vital to county recovery efforts.

"I knew when I called you that it would be done," Winslow said.

Winslow had said five days after the storm that the firefighters had done more than could ever be repaid.

County Manager Paul Gregory was also impressed with and appreciative of what fighters accomplished.

"I knew what you could do, I've seen it before. We had no idea of the magnitude of this storm. Without you we'd have been dead in the water."

"You just can't put a figure on it. Without you we couldn't have made it."

Gregory said he hopes the county will continue to assist fire department, which are all volunteer in

the county, with funds for buildings and equipment.

Commissioner Mack Nixon also said he appreciated what firefighters did during the storm, and reiterated his commitment to providing funds for fire department needs.

Nixon said he has worked during his tenure on the board to increase appropriations to fire department, and will continue to do so.

Winslow was also recognized for his work during the preparation and aftermath of Isabel.

"Harry, you need to be recognized, too," Nelson said. "You're in a position to be the one to pull it all together. You did a great job."

Nelson also asked firefighters to give the county feedback on storm response so that the county plan can be analyzed and updated.

10 public housing units flooded

SUSAN R. HARRIS

Ten units at Hertford Housing Authority are expected to be condemned as a result of flooding during Hurricane Isabel.

Housing Authority Director Rhonda Waters said that up to 4 feet of water entered units on Stokes Drive.

While some of the families in the two-story units wanted to stay and live on the second floor, Waters said she had state environmental officials come and check the apartments. The state officials said they were unsafe.

There was also \$150,000 in damages to other units owned by the Housing Authority, including roof and tree damage.

As of late last week, the Housing Authority had found temporary housing for all but three families, and those families were staying with relative, Waters said. One family has nine members.

There was only one unoccupied unit in Hertford, and one family got placement there. Ellizabeth City also allowed several displaced Hertford families to move into public housing units there.

Waters said the families who lost their homes will have first priority of available units when vacancies come available in Hertford.

The Housing Authority is making application to HUD for disaster funds to build more housing units.

"It is my hope that I will be able to reconstruct those units at another site," Waters said.

Rather than a complex of duplex or townhouse dwellings, Waters said she is hoping to get approval for a scattered site project to include individual houses and duplexes, something that is not distinguishable as public housing.

"I do feel very hopeful about it," Waters said.

The Stokes Drive units were built in the 1960s in a location Waters said was "not ideal." There are structural problems with some units, Waters said.

Damage updates

Isabel damage estimates continue to come in for Perquimans County.

Assistant County Manager Bobby Darden said Perquimans County residents incurred \$35-40 million in damage to dwellings alone.

The initial estimate for damages to homes, public buildings and infrastructure was \$153 million.

County Extension Agent Lewis Smith has estimated well over \$1 million in damages to farm structures, and almost \$5 million in crop damage. Cotton took the hardest hit, with damages to that crop estimated at almost \$3 million.

N.C. Forestry Officer Clarence Watson had no dollar figure for timber damage, but told Darden that he estimates 15-25 percent damage to standing timber.

FEMA Disaster Recovery Center takes 1400 apps

SUSAN R. HARRIS

The FEMA Disaster Recovery Center in Hertford is open for business at the Albemarle Commission Building.

Don North, FEMA Public Information Officer assigned to Raleigh, said so far, 1404 applications have been received in Perquimans County.

Over \$879,000 has been paid to residents to date, with almost \$500,000 of that for housing.

The center opened on Sept. 29 and will remain open as long as people continue to file claims.

"They remain open as long as they're busy," North said.

Fifty-eight people visited the center on Monday, Oct. 6, bringing the total number of visitors to the center to 277.

Assistant County Manager Bobby Darden said Monday night that Perquimans ranks No. 4 in North Carolina in applications for assistance submitted.

DRC hours are 8 a.m.-

p.m.

FEMA spokesperson Charlie Henderson, who is presently doing field work in Perquimans County, said anyone who wants to see if they qualify for assistance from FEMA should call 1-800-621-3362 to register and get a nine-digit claim number. No one can get assistance without a claim number, which must be obtained by telephone.

Those who visit the DRC for assistance before getting a claim number must use a phone at the center to get a claim number.

Anyone who may need help should call within 60 days after the county was declared a federal disaster area, which means by Nov. 17. Failure to get a registration number by Nov. 17 will mean that residents can not get any financial assistance.

The FEMA spokesperson said you should stay on the line when trying to get a number, even if it takes a few minutes or if there is a message that suggests you might want to call back.

"Stay on that line,"

Henderson said.

After getting the claim number, applicants may visit the DRC at the Albemarle Commission Building.

Henderson said it is almost impossible to tell people what items may and may not be funded by FEMA without doing an interview and individual analysis.

"It's always case by case," Henderson said.

FEMA monies are for life's essentials, Henderson said, such as safe and secure housing.

Generally, Henderson said FEMA will not pay for insured damages, but may help with any deductibles. They will not pay for damage to vacation homes, although they may help with the personal property inside second homes.

FEMA may provide funds for temporary housing or such items as medical and dental needs.

The agency may also help cover the costs of such items as generators and chain saws.

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WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY
High: 72
Low: 63
RAIN/THUNDER

FRIDAY
High: 78
Low: 61
SCATTERED T'STORMS

SATURDAY
High: 77
Low: 61
SCATTERED T'STORMS