

THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY



Pirates put relays, Downing in state meet, 7

"News from Next Door"

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McCrorry warns insurance may be lacking

People pitch in to help

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

A week after tornadoes flattened some Perquimans County homes and heavily damaged others, residents and volunteers were starting on the process of cleaning up and rebuilding.

Early on Saturday morning, church members from at least three denominations were on the ground in the Chapanoke community on Parker Lane.

Some of the damage appeared much as it did the week before, but tarps now cover some of the roof damage and about five dozen volunteers were picking up bits of debris from the yards and helping people move. Residents say that the homes without tarps are probably unsafe to go inside and will have to be destroyed.

About two dozen members of Up River Friends Meeting in Belvidere were there to help clean up the yard and pack up their belongings for one resident.

Rocco and Shannon Marzano and their young daughter Juliette had just gotten home before the storm hit. They'd lived in the house for the past three years.

He says he was in the bathroom when the tornado struck. The winds blew windows out, and picked up one of their cars and tossed it against another.

"I guess I would have been smarter if I had just stayed there," he said of the bathroom. "But I had to

See PITCH IN, 2



STAFF PHOTOS
BY PETER WILLIAMS

Brenda Morse, 69, a member of Norfolk's First Baptist Church, uses a rake to clean the back yard of a home owned by David Parker on Chapanoke Road, Saturday.

A crucifix (right) remains on the wall as members of Up River Friends Meeting in Belvidere clean the living room of a home owned by Rocco and Shannon Marzano on Parker Lane, Saturday.

While it doesn't appear the home suffered serious damage, Rocco Marzano said the first contractor who inspected it threw his hands in the air after five seconds and said there wasn't anything he could do to fix the structural damage.



BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

Some area residents who think they have insurance coverage to cover the storm damage may not, according to Gov. Pat McCrorry.

McCrorry wrote a five-page letter to President Obama on May 2 appealing for disaster help.

A copy was obtained by the Perquimans Weekly.

The governor also said even those who suffered what is considered "minor" damage by FEMA may not have the resources to recover from event.

"It is very possible that many residents are covered for fire but are not covered for the wind and hail damage, or alternatively had limited coverage on their manufactured home," McCrorry said. "These factors influenced the residents' expectations of insurance benefits to assist in the repair and or rebuilding of their home."

"The risk of wind and hail damage coverage is relatively new to North Carolina insurers. Local officials and insurance underwriters advised NCEM and local governments that coverage is limited due to costs to include wind and/or hail coverage."

Home insurance can come in a number of forms, and a person who could have been covered for fire probably isn't eligible if the damage came from wind.

In the survey done of the area, 35 percent of Perquimans storm victims said they have insurance. That compares to 5 percent in Pasquotank, 10 percent in Chowan and 58 percent in Beaufort.

McCrorry argues that state is already straining to cover the disasters it's had to deal with and needs federal help.

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Officials: Storm moved too fast for more warning

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

A reverse 911 system that allows Perquimans County to send out bulk phone calls in the event of an emergency wasn't used during the tornadoes April 25 because the storm evolved so fast.

Perquimans County was under a watch for six hours before the tornadoes actu-

ally hit.

While with 911 residents call a central number to report a problem, the CODE RED system works the other way around. The county can send out phone calls with a pre-recorded message to a massive audience or only to a select few in a specific region.

Perquimans County Manager Frank Heath said the

county could have used the CODE RED system to update residents about recovery efforts after the fact.

"It probably could have been used on Saturday to talk about emergency response issues," Heath said last week. "What we had was a lot of minor damage and specific areas that had some major damage."

Bill Sammler, the regional

meteorologist in charge of warning coordination for the National Weather Service, agreed that tornadoes are a hard thing to predict and offer little warning.

"These are short-fused events. You may have a second or just a couple of minutes to react," Sammler said. "Obviously if you get that message after the fact it's not going to do any good."

Even emergency sirens have their limitations.

"You have to be able to hear them," he said. "There was a time when people had their windows open a lot but now with air conditioning they don't."

Sirens also have a limited distance, perhaps a mile and a half. If a power outage preceded the storm, there may not be power enough to use

them. Perquimans County is also about 328 square miles and while some areas are closely populated, many residents are scattered out in rural areas.

The Perquimans County Schools has its own automated phone system to alert parents and used it Sunday. Brenda Lassiter, the

See WARNING, 2

STAFF PHOTO BY
PETER WILLIAMS

The Hertford Grammar School chorus performs Thursday at a National Day Of Prayer program at Hertford Baptist Church. A special prayer was said for those hurt by the recent tornado.



Prayer Day takes new meaning

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

Special prayers went out last week for those impacted by the storm that swept through the Albemarle in April.

National Day of Prayer gatherings in Hertford and Holiday Island are annual events. Speakers are asked

to pray for elected officials, emergency responders, teachers and a host of others.

But Bill Thorn, pastor of Burgess Baptist Church asked to make a last-minute addition to the program and spoke for storm victims.

"I believe that maybe this is the Lord's way of telling us that disasters are real and

they don't just happen in other places to other people. In a way we were blessed that it wasn't worse."

Thorn spoke of the Biblical passage on the Good Samaritan in Luke. It tells of a man who was robbed, beaten and left by the road. A priest and others passed

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Commerce secretary tours region

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

N.C. Secretary of Commerce Sharon Decker said last week that Perquimans County has

taken steps to foster economic growth, but agreed rural areas haven't kept pace with their urban counterparts in emerging from the recession.

Decker made a tour through the county on Thursday morning before heading to Elizabeth City and Pasquotank County. On Friday, she toured Camden and Currituck. In Currituck, she made the announcement

of 60 new jobs coming. Government Contracting Specialists Inc. (GCS, Inc.) will locate its offices in Currituck County and make a \$325,000 investment.

Decker made no similar announcement in Perquimans, but Perquimans County Manager Frank Heath said that day

See DECKER VISIT, 5



STAFF PHOTO
BY PETER WILLIAMS

Lureen Williams, owner of The Silver Fox Jewelry store in Hertford, and her son Brock speak with NC Secretary of Commerce Sharon Decker (right), Thursday. Decker was visiting Perquimans County to learn more and to discuss economic development.

