

When the Going Gets Tough ...

When we're comfortable and times are good, we sometimes forget how quickly the situation can change. In positions of leadership, it comes with the territory to prepare for every eventuality, just in case that situation does change. However, when a disaster such as Hurricane Irene strikes, effective response cannot just come from one person or from one administration, no matter how well prepared. And inevitably, things happen that no one can reasonably predict. In times such as these, we see just how valuable, dedicated, and hard working our emergency response personnel really are. We know many of them from our daily routine. A great majority of them are our friends, neighbors and co-workers, and when the sailing is smooth, which is – thankfully – often the case, we don't see these people in action.

Well, now we've seen it – a lot of it – and I need to take a moment to thank all of the emergency personnel for their expertise and professionalism during our time of crisis. On the front lines, we received tremendous service from our local police and fire departments, the Office of Emergency Management (OEM), and the EMS. Many thanks also to the County of Hudson OEM for their deployment of emergency pumps and generators. I am also extremely grateful to Meadowlands Hospital and Medical Center and McCabe Ambulance Service for setting up an emergency room at the Huber Street School. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is yet another organization that provided vital response action and deserves our gratitude for orchestrating a disaster recovery center in our library. And I can't forget all the hard work of the Secaucus Department of Public Works for their swift action directly following the hurricane and all they've done since to get us back on our feet and ensure that facilities, infrastructure, and municipal operations as a whole are fully functional.

Other vital elements of our response came from you, the residents of Secaucus, as you heeded warnings, followed important directions, and helped out your neighbors where you could. Without your cooperation, the impact of this natural disaster could have been much greater. Thank you for continuing to display all the characteristics that one only sees in a truly strong and caring community. The local cable station and the town website continuously post important municipal information in good times and bad, so check back periodically for the latest announcements and updates: Comcast channel 36 and www.secaucusnj.org.

Once again, my gratitude goes out to everyone who helped this town pull through a difficult time. I know that some of you may still be in the recovery stage. If this is the case, please remember that FEMA has declared Secaucus one of many areas where residents may be eligible for federal assistance in the form of grants and/or loans for home repair, unemployment payments, recovery of personal items, temporary housing, and other disaster-related needs. Services such as crisis counseling and response and recovery guides are also available. If you feel that these or other related resources may be necessary, call FEMA directly at 1-800-621-3362 or visit their web site: www.disasterassistance.gov. My condolences to all who suffered loss in the storm; if we can be of further assistance, please don't hesitate contact me on my direct line at Town Hall: 201-330-2005.