

Basics of Crisis Communication with the Public – from press to social media

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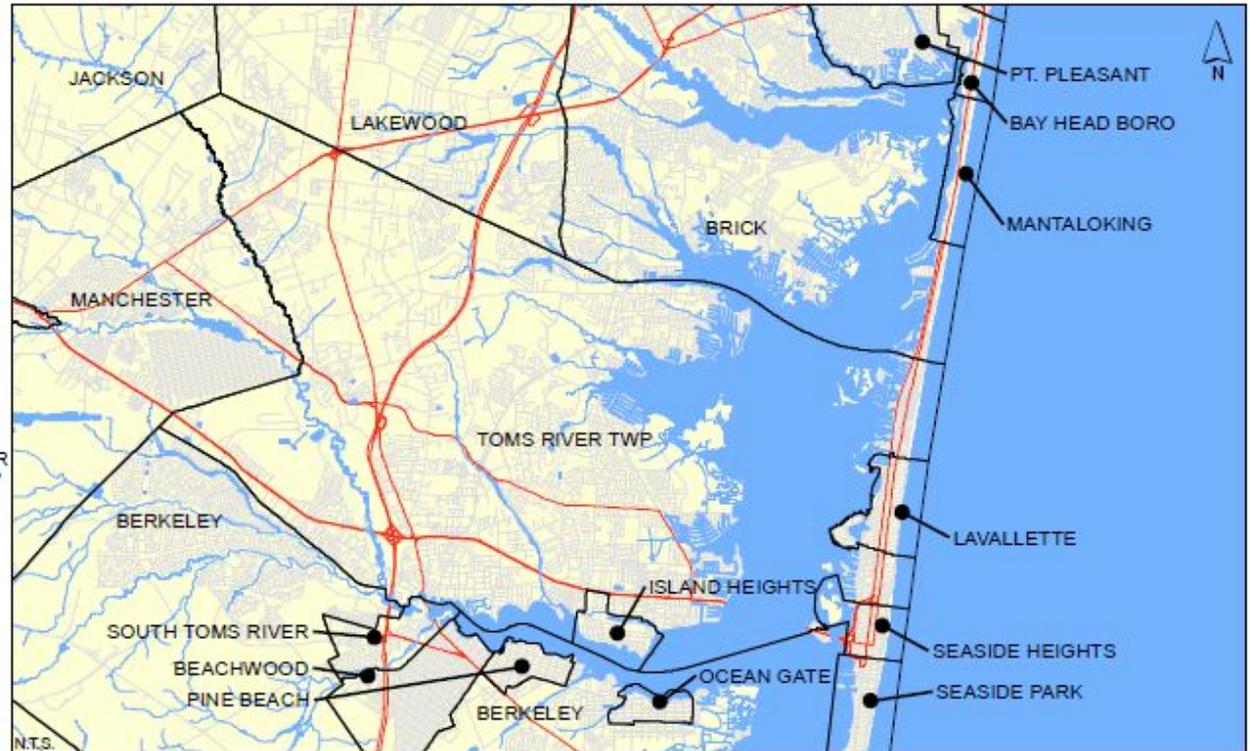
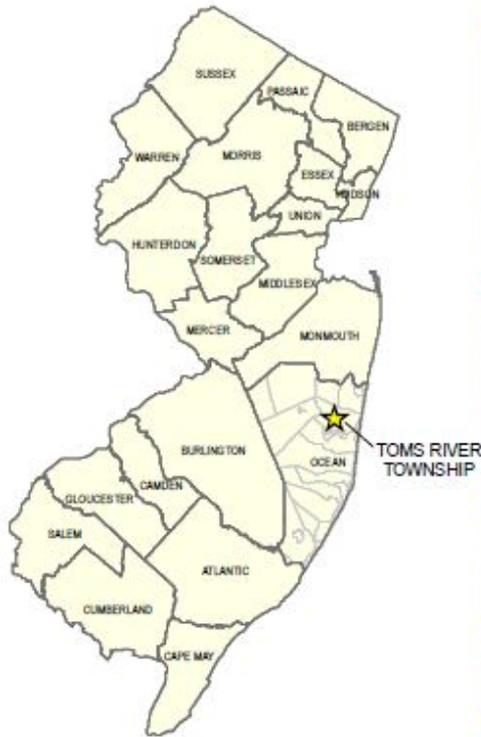
Preparedness before the storm

- Gov. Christie issued evacuation for barrier island residents for 4 pm Sunday, Oct. 28th.
- Opened two shelters in Toms River.
- Toms River Office of Emergency Management passed out flyers to residents of barrier island and low-lying areas to give them directions to shelters.

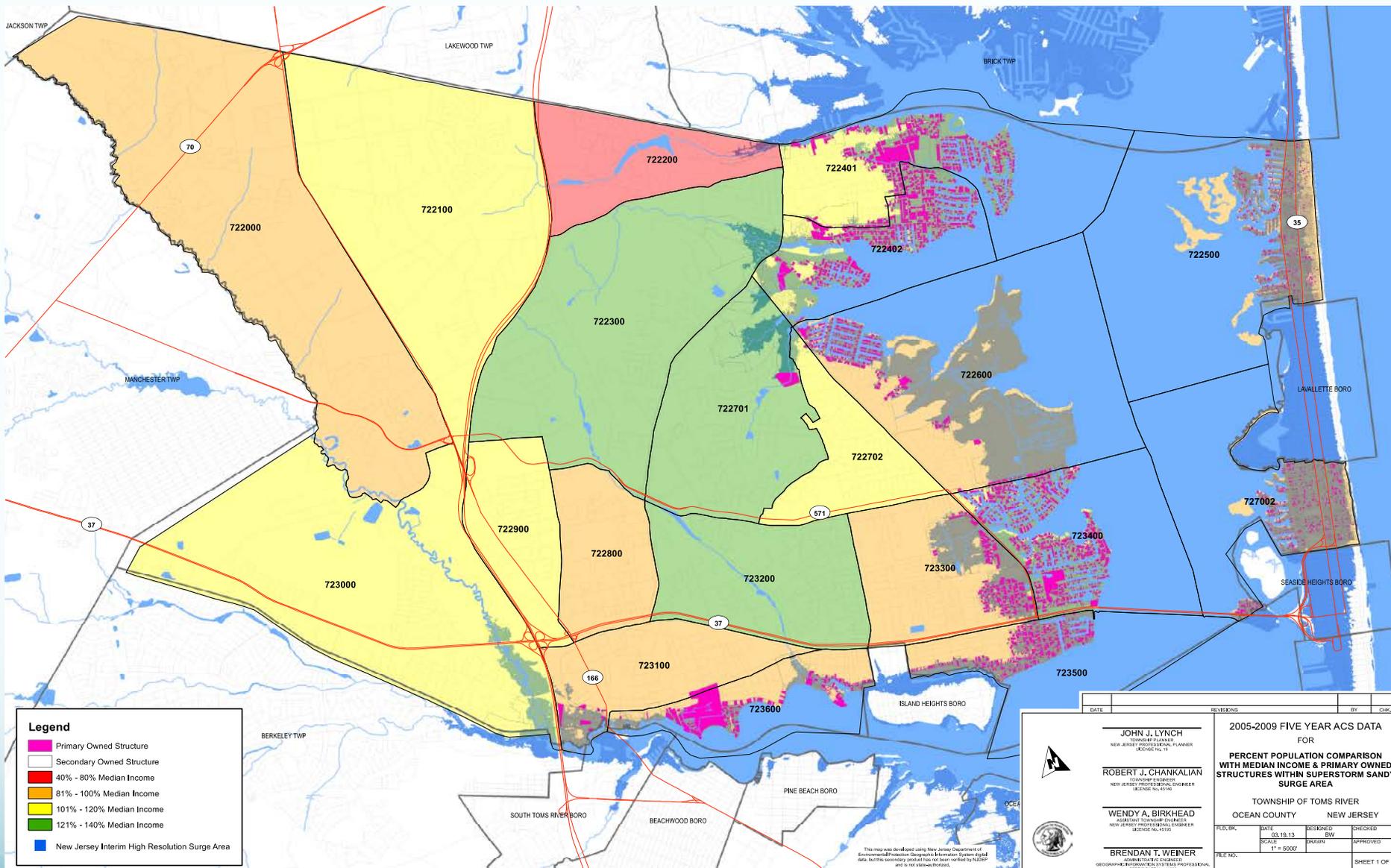
Challenges of Communicating With Residents During a Crisis

- **Most residential homes didn't have power**
 - Power outage would last 11 days
- **Town Hall did not have power**
 - Constituents could not come in for information
 - Difficult to update website
- **A majority of households do not keep battery-operated radios**
- **Large population of seniors; don't own a computer**
- **Cell phone reception was spotty**

Toms River Township



- 41.62 square miles
- Approximately 7% of Ocean County lands



Legend

- Primary Owned Structure
- Secondary Owned Structure
- 40% - 80% Median Income
- 81% - 100% Median Income
- 101% - 120% Median Income
- 121% - 140% Median Income
- New Jersey Interim High Resolution Surge Area

| | | | | |
|---|------------|----------|---------|------------|
| | | | | |
| DATE | REVISIONS | BY | CHK. | |
| 2005-2009 FIVE YEAR ACS DATA FOR PERCENT POPULATION COMPARISON WITH MEDIAN INCOME & PRIMARY OWNED STRUCTURES WITHIN SUPERSTORM SANDY SURGE AREA | | | | |
| TOWNSHIP OF TOMS RIVER OCEAN COUNTY NEW JERSEY | | | | |
| FILE NO. | DATE | DRAWN BY | CHECKED | |
| | 03.19.13 | BW | | |
| SCALE | 1" = 5000' | APPROVED | | |
| FILE NO. | | | | SHEET 1 OF |

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This map was developed using New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Geographic Information System digital data, but this secondary product has not been verified by NJDEP and is not guaranteed.

Forms of internal communication

- By Day 2, Mayor formed a “Task Force” team to assess problems and seek resolutions.
- Included at daily briefings were:

Mayor, OEM, Police Dept., Public Works, Administration, Fire Dept., Engineer, Resource Manager and Public Information Officer.

- Established that all media calls would originate through PIO, so that everyone was on the same page.
- Task force met 7 days/week until Thanksgiving.





Ortley Beach







Hurricane Sandy in Toms River Twp.

- Roughly 10,500 homes sustained Hurricane damage
- 6,500 damaged homes were on the barrier island
 - Ortley Beach- 2,000 homes
 - North Beaches- 4,500 homes
- 4,000 damaged homes were on the mainland
 - Green Island/Silverton area

Forms of external communication

- Send out formal press releases/Media updates with status of utilities, FEMA news, debris progress, re-entry plan
- Update website with daily messages, sometimes hourly
- Post updates on Facebook
- Call in to radio stations for the more important updates
- Email all press contacts- They will print your story or call you for an exclusive quote
- Return phone calls to constituents
- Be honest, explain why procedures are in place
- Began using Nixle program
- CERT Team passed out flyers with locations of clothing, shelter, etc.

Lack of utilities











Legend

 Sewer Service Not Available

 Sewer Service Not Available



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**PROPOSED ORTLEY BEACH
 REPOPULATION MAP
 FOR**

ORTLEY BEACH AREA

**TOMS RIVER TOWNSHIP
 OCEAN COUNTY
 NEW JERSEY**

| FILE NO. | DATE | DESIGNED | CHECKED |
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| | 01.31.13 | BW | |
| | SCALE 1" = 300' | BROWN | APPROVED |

Local Media

- **Radio stations**
 - WOBM
 - NJ 101.5
 - The Breeze
- **Television**
 - ABC, CBS, NBC, Fox 5, Channel 9 News (Philly & NY stations)
 - NJTV
 - News12
 - Verizon's FiOs1
- **Newspapers/Online papers**
 - The Patch
 - NJ.com
 - Asbury Park Press
 - Toms River Times
 - Star-Ledger
 - The Record/Bergen Times
- **Other Media**
 - Township Website
 - Township Facebook page
 - Emailed Daily Updates to media

National Media

- **Radio stations**
 - NPR
- **Television**
 - CNN
 - BBC
 - The Weather Channel
- **Newspapers/Online papers**
 - Wall Street Journal
 - Huffington Post
 - USA Today
 - New York Times
 - Reuters

Media interest in storm coverage





Working with the Media





Police Department issued a re-entry schedule

- **SCHEDULE:** Registration will take place at 08:00 at the Bellcrest Plaza 935 Fischer Blvd, Toms River.
- **08:00 to 08:45** – registration
- **08:45** buses leave for Ortley Beach.
- The busses will make continual loops between the affected area and the registration site.
- **Wednesday** **11/14/2012** – Rt. 35N to Rt. 35S Lavallette to Seaside Heights
- **Thursday** **11/15/2012** **TBA**
- **Friday** **11/16/2012** **TBA**
- **Saturday** **11/17/2012** **TBA**
- **Sunday 11/18/2012** **TBA**
- **Monday 11/19/2012** **TBA**
- The locations to be announced will be dictated by safety. The Toms River Building Department is working diligently to mark out hazards and we must follow their lead. There should be 48 hours' notice on the Township Website.
- The busses will run between 08:45 and 3:00PM. All residents are to leave the Barrier Island by 3:00PM.
- **PHASE #2 - To be announced.**
- The geography of Ortley Beach changes daily. The State of New Jersey, Department of Transportation, the Township of Toms River and our partners are working feverishly to improve the roads in Ortley Beach. Many sinkholes have been observed and repaired but some remain un-remediated. Conditions improve daily but there is much work to do. The second phase of this plan remains fluid and will be posted as soon as practical.

Bus transportation to visit homes on barrier island



Provide daily updates on website and email local media

Include info. Such as:

- Ice & Water distribution
- Municipal Court session updates
- Re-entry plan
- Verizon had a communications trailer set up in Silverton Park as well as Bellcrest Plaza for those needing to charge their cell phones.
- Disaster Assistance Available from FEMA
- Where can I pick up my mail?
- When can I check on my house?
- The gas company had to shut down the gas, and it still smells from the methane in the air. Add to that the downed wires, and it's dangerous to let people in and out. The gas infrastructure is so compromised that it will take some months before it can all be re-built. People should plan to rent a home for at least a year.

Other topics for communicating include:

- **Power Updates**
- “JCP&L is focusing on the mainland areas to restore electricity. Residents can expect to see power restored to homes and businesses along the Route 37 corridor first. JCP&L currently has 4,000 people on the ground working to get power lines restored.”
- Garbage and Recycling collections
- How to register with FEMA
- Donations
- Capt. In TRPD made 2 runs a day to CVS to get prescriptions.
- Print out daily updates for front desk and anyone on phones

Working with the media

- If you invite them, they will come.

Hold Press Conferences







Tips for effective communication during a crisis

- Have media contacts handy
- Establish relationships with various reporters
- Work with neighboring towns to coordinate efforts
- Listen to residents' concerns
- Hold press conferences
- Update website daily
- Use Facebook when possible. Cell phone users tend to go on Facebook when power is out.