

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

OF THE

SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE

Verbatim Minutes

A regular meeting of the Public Safety Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislative Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, 725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York, on Thursday, September 8th, 2011, at 10:00 AM.

Members Present:

Legislator Jack Eddington - Chairman
Legislator DuWayne Gregory - Vice-Chair
Legislator Kate Browning
Legislator Tom Cilmi
Legislator John Kennedy

Also In Attendance:

Presiding Officer William Lindsay - District No. 8
Legislator Sarah Anker - District No. 6
Legislator Wayne Horsley - District No. 14
George Nolan - Counsel to the Legislature
Sara Simpson - Office of Counsel to the Legislature
Renee Ortiz - Chief Deputy Clerk/Suffolk County Legislature
Robert Calarco - Aide to Legislator Eddington
Terry Pearsall - Chief of Staff to Presiding Officer Lindsay
Kara Hahn - Director of Communications for Presiding Officer Lindsay
Marge Acevedo - Aide to Presiding Officer Lindsay
Bobby Knight - Aide to Presiding Officer Lindsay
Mike Cavanagh - Aide to Presiding Officer Lindsay
Michael Pitcher - Aide to Presiding Officer Lindsay
Paul Perillie - Aide to Majority Caucus
Jason Richberg - Aide to Legislator Gregory
John Ortiz - Budget Review Office
Diane Dono - Budget Review Office
Eric Kopp - Deputy County Executive
Ed Hennessy - County Executive Assistant
Ted Nieves - Deputy Inspector/Suffolk County Police Department
Mark White - Deputy Chief of Homeland Security and Anti-Terrorism/SCPD
Tracy Pollak - Headquarters/Suffolk County Police Department
Kerry Kneitel - Suffolk County Sheriff's Office
Joe Williams - Commissioner/Fire, Rescue & Emergency Services
John Searing - Deputy Commissioner/Fire, Rescue & Emergency Services
Joel Vetter - Coordinator of Emergency Services/FRES
Anthony LaFerrera - Chairman/Suffolk County FRES Commission
Dr. James Tomarken - Commissioner/Suffolk County Health Department
Len Marchese - Director of Management & Research/DHS
Bob DeLagi - Acting Director of Emergency Services/DHS
Yvonne Milewski - Chief Medical Examiner/Department of Health Services
Chris Sortino - Chief Public Health Sanitarian/Dept of Health Services
Kevin Carey - Administrator/John J. Foley Skilled Nursing Facility/DHS
Art Flescher - Director-Division of Community Mental Hygiene/DHS

Jason Hime - Environmental Quality Division/Dept of Health Services
John Bruckner - Pres.-National Grid/Long Island Electric T&D Services
Tom Beisner - National Grid/Director of Electric Design & Construction
Robert DeMarinis - National Grid/VP of Gas Operations for New York
Michael Deering - LIPA/Vice-President of Environmental Affairs
Matt Cohen - LIPA/Director of Government Relations
Mark Gross - LIPA/Manager of Media Relations
Wajeeha Aziz - Verizon/Director of Operations, Suffolk County
Matthews George - Verizon/Director CO/OSP Engineering, Long Island
Patrick Lespinasse - Verizon/Dep Dir of Government & External Affairs
Joan Bocchieri Gilroy - Cablevision/Director of Government Affairs
Adam Falk - Cablevision/Vice-President of Government & Public Affairs
Dan Ahouse - Cablevision/Vice-President of Government Affairs for NY
Hank Mulligan - 1st Vice-President/Superior Officer's Association
John Cowey - 2nd Vice-President/Superior Officer's Association
Russ McCormick - Suffolk County Detective's Association, Legislative Chair
Noel DiGerolamo - 2nd Vice-President/PBA
Gail D'Ambrosio - President/Probation Officer's Association
Patrick Halpin - Secretary/Suffolk County Water Authority
Hope Callazo - American Red Cross/Community Service Program
Dot Kerrigan - 3rd Vice-President/AME
Gerald Lauber - SCSPCA/Chief of Detectives
Tom Cappetta - SCSPCA/Detective
Roy Gross - SCSPCA/Chief of Department
Laura Ahearn - Executive Director/Parents for Megan's Law
James Nolan - Superintendent/Sachem School District
Allan Gierstenlauer - Superintendent/Longwood School District
Lars Clemensen - Superintendent/Hampton Bays School District
John Moran - Director of Safety/Hampton Bays School District
Eva Demyen - Superintendent/Deer Park School District
Elizabeth Barker - Director of Emergency Services/American Red Cross
John Miller - Chief Executive Officer/American Red Cross-Long Island
Kathy Johannsen - Atria Assisted Living
Glenn Rappaport - Birchwood Suites Assisted Living
Raymond Mayo - Community Activist
All Other Interested Parties

Verbatim Minutes Taken By:

Alison Mahoney - Court Stenographer

(*The meeting was called to order at 10:07 A.M. *)

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. Isn't this great? Everybody stood and they're ready to go.
Okay, if Legislator Kennedy could lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Salutation

If we could just stand for a moment of silence. And keep in mind that September 11th is coming up and all the people that have passed away during that tragedy.

Moment of Silence Observed

Thank you very much, be seated. All right, as everybody knows, we're going to be dealing with the emergency preparedness, a quick view of the situations. But we have a **Public Portion** and I have one speaker for public portion, so why don't we do that and they have three minutes. Dr. Gerard Lubin (sic).

DR. LAUBER:

I'm going to defer to the conversation with FRES that you have scheduled on here, so that's fine.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay, that's great. Thank you.

Okay, I want to thank everybody for coming, and I want to make clear that this is not a hearing into the performance of the effectiveness of the emergency plan. This is the Public Safety meeting and what we've decided is to put aside the other issues that we were going to deal with because our constituents are very concerned. And what we would like to know is if another disaster or possible disaster was coming our way in ten days, what would we do differently, what would we do better, and what help could anybody in this room give to an agency or -- or the County to help you do your job better? This is not to say you didn't do what you could, it's to say what can we do better?

I found out that everybody likes to point the finger, but it doesn't help us move forward. We're going to -- we're living in the present and the future and I want to prepare for that. And so that's going to be the agenda, and I will facilitate this very concisely. I don't want to hear what somebody didn't do, I want to know what you did and what you can do better and how we -- anybody in this room can help you; I don't care what agency. You ask for help, our job will be to help you get that.

And I want to tell you why that it's important to me. I've gotten a copy of an Executive Order, No. 5-2011 -- and I just received this recently -- and it talks about the emergency preparedness and it was put out by our County Executive, and it talks about who is responsible to help FRES coordinate everything. And I was very surprised when I saw it, because it says, "The Chief Executive of the County of Suffolk, herein after the County Executive, or in his or her absence the Chief Deputy County Executive, or in his or her absence the Chair of the Public Safety Committee, will take the responsibility to execute and implement the provisions of this law." I did not receive one phone call. I was so far out of the loop, it's incredible. That will not happen again. I have been asking for increased communication; I will now demand it. All the Legislators were not informed; I will be taking responsibility for that. But I'm asking you to make sure that you out there keep me in the loop, because it obviously has not traveled down.

Now, I know that nothing can happen to the Chief Executive, I understand that. And he has Chris Kent, who I sometimes think really is Clark Kent, who can do it, but I am not a superhero. I need to be communicated with, and I will communicate with my peers on the Legislature. No one will be without information. That is one thing that we are making a promise to -- to the citizens of Suffolk County; communication will flow, whether it's voluntary or it's mandatory.

Now, since it's in the Executive Order, I believe that the County Executive will make sure that we are all -- that at least I and the Chief Deputy are present in the Command Center when things are being decided.

(*Presiding Officer Lindsay entered the meeting at 10:13 A.M. *)

With that in mind, you can see that we want to move forward. And so what I've decided is I would like to ask -- let me see here. I would like to start with the -- way of the flow of this meeting is I'm going to ask the utility providers to come up and to give us some information about how it went, what -- and I understand, you are in the middle of clean-up, you haven't even gotten to the total assessment; I understand that, and there will be plenty of time for that, plenty of time. But we would like a brief assessment and then what you have seen could be better and then what you could

-- what we could do to help facilitate better communications. I want to make that clear.

I just want to state that I remember last year this time -- I mean, of course, if you watch News 12, after every commercial they had the Jaws theme so that scaring the public was very effective; I don't know if that's helpful, it was effective. And a year ago we saw on the headlines of the local paper, four million dollars wasted with a parking lot filled with utility vehicles ready to hit the storm that was supposed to come. Because now, get ready for, you know, the failure to prepare adequately; that's not what this committee is about. We'll let the media and all those other people point the finger of blame. We want to make sure we are better prepared tomorrow than we were yesterday. That does not imply that we were not prepared yesterday; I want to make sure that's on the record. That's not what this is about. And I want to make sure that you are aware of what I'm saying, so this is the universal sign for yes (nodded head), you get what I'm saying? Okay, then we'll go.

Okay. So if I could get LIPA representatives, Verizon, Cablevision, and anybody else that's a utility provider, if they could just come up to this table, introduce yourself and we'll go from there.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. Maybe if you could just start -- maybe, Joan, you could just introduce yourself and we'll go right across the table.

MS. GILROY:

Okay. Joan --

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

You've got to press it down. That's so no one can talk too long, your finger gets tired.

MS. GILROY:

Joan Gilroy, Director of Government Affairs for Cablevision, 1600 Motor Parkway.

MS. AZIZ:

Good morning. Wajeeha Aziz, Director of Operations for Suffolk County for Verizon.

MR. GEORGE:

Good morning. Matthews George, Director of Engineering for Verizon, Long Island.

MR. DeMARINIS:

Good morning. Bob DeMarinis, Vice-President of Gas Operations for National Grid.

MR. DEERING:

Good morning. Michael Deering, Vice-President of Environmental Affairs for LIPA.

MR. BRUCKNER:

My name is John Bruckner, President of National Grid, Long Island Electric T and D Services.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you, everybody, for coming. I just want to advise you that a couple of us on here, the panel, have a little difficulty with hearing. So if you could just make sure you speak into the mic loud and clear, I don't want to have to go "huh".

Okay. I know there'll be some questions, but what I would like you to respond is first to what I had asked. Okay? What was your response as you see it, briefly; what is your initial assessment of how you could improve that response, if at all; and then what could you guys do to help each other, what can we do to help you in Suffolk County. All right, it's yours.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Go ahead, Michael.

MR. DEERING:

You want us to start?

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

That's fine, I don't care who starts.

MR. DEERING:

Thank you, Chairman Eddington, Presiding Officer Lindsay and Legislators Kennedy, Cilmi, Browning and Gregory, for your interest in holding this forum today. And I appreciate the comments that you started with, Chairman Eddington.

As you are aware, LIPA and National Grid work as a team on these efforts and we are in constant preparation mode for hurricanes and major storm events like the one we've seen. We have a Storm Emergency Restoration Procedure that we follow to prepare and to implement the measures that are needed, depending upon the weather or the storm event. We began to monitor Hurricane Irene a week in advance of its arrival here. We were monitoring it around the clock and we began our preparations based on our Storm Emergency Restoration Procedures and the weather reports.

We did at that time, prior to the storm, prepare our restoration equipment. We updated and increased our inventories, we pre-stocked areas across Long Island, including out on the East End, with wires, transformers, poles, cross-arms, etcetera, and additional restoration equipment as was necessary based upon, again, a major hurricane event coming in. We began at that time coordinating our efforts with the State, with New York City, as part of our service territory does go into Far Rockaway, the two counties, local management organizations and many of the DPWs and local organizations across the Island.

Our electric and gas personnel were available now on 16-hour shifts, began to work those shifts. All vacations were cancelled in the event -- in anticipation of this storm. We added additional call center personnel and we secured off-Island crews based upon the lessons learned in some of our previous events, and began to house those restoration crews here on the Island. In total, at that point in time, prior to the storm we had secured about twenty-two hundred off-Island tree trim and line crews, and we had about 1,650 on and off-Island crews here the day of the storm ready to begin work.

And again, when we talk about when we're ready to begin work, it is after the storm passes and the winds begin to die down and the weather improves. At that point in time, we had over 1,000 survey personnel deployed across the Island to assess and survey the damage. The first thing that we need to do is to understand where the damage is and, as you've read over the last week and been integrally involved in it, it was pretty widespread across the entire Island. Throughout the storm period, we continued to increase our off-Island crews, and at the height we had over 4,000 line workers and tree-trimmers on the Island and a dedicated staff of over 7,000 people working specifically on the storm.

Prior to the storm, we also began communicating, and I think that's something that we are going to be taking lessons learned from here and trying to figure out how we can do a better job. But prior to that, we began to communicate with our customers, with elected officials, with our critical care customers and special needs facilities, as well as our employees about being prepared. We did that in numerous ways; we did it through e-mail blasts, web-messaging, media interviews, press releases, newspaper ads, social media outreach that we used for the first time including Face Book and Twitter extensively throughout this storm event. We had communication with elected officials and communications directly with the Town Supervisors, the County Executives in Nassau and Suffolk.

And your words, Legislator Eddington, about directly with you and the other County Legislators is one that we will take back as we go forward, recognizing the importance and your responsibilities going forward.

We also made personal calls to all our critical care customers letting them know that this is a major event, they may be out of power for a number of days; hopefully they can prepare for that and, if necessary and if possible, find alternatives mechanisms to help them get through the storm event.

Remember, this was the largest hurricane to hit since hurricane Gloria in 1985. It's the third largest storm in history and it's the largest mobilization of efforts that LIPA and National Grid have had over the years, and John Bruckner can certainly speak more detailed about that. We had 523,000 outages, as you read. The destruction of our system was widespread, we had almost 6,000 individual locational damages to our system, whether it's poles, that's trees, that's wires, etcetera, substations, transformers, etcetera; each of those had to be fixed. Given the destruction, LIPA and National Grid restored more than 93% of those customers by Friday, with 99% of those customers being restored by the end of Sunday evening, seven days out. And by Monday morning, all of our customers were restored as a result -- any of the outages, as a result of the storm.

One of the other lessons learned is while not as specific as many would have liked, our communications team, working with the operational security who were on the ground fixing this, implemented a proactive communication strategy to try to set expectations, and I think this is an important factor, to set the expectations of what the customers can expect, that a full restoration would take anywhere from several days to up to a week. To provide customers with that information, we implemented an outbound calling effort of over 800,000 people over the course of the week, along with all of those other mechanisms and continually updating our communication system and our website.

We also had ongoing communications that far exceeded any of our prior communication efforts based on this storm. We have new technologies, we utilize those technologies and try to get that information out to all our customers. As well as coordinating with nearly 100 villages, 13 towns, three cities, two counties and approximately 70 State and County Legislators throughout this process, and we need to do a better job and we will work with you and all the other agencies to try to do that. We also worked closely with Nassau OEM and Suffolk FRES, and I want to commend Joe Williams for his efforts over the past week and his attempts to coordinate all of the restoration efforts across the Island and all of the infrastructure.

(*Legislator Anker entered the meeting at 10:25 A.M. *)

I think it's important, as you said, with the storm now passed, and we do continue to strengthen our system, a number of the restoration efforts out there were temporary in nature, we continue to go out and fix those, harden them up. But with it completed now, LIPA and National Grid will undergo a thorough review of our processes by many. We need to analyze and understand what went right over the last week and what could be improved, such as the communication and the coordination efforts that you have mentioned. And to that end, we're engaging in a number of follow-up reviews. We're going to participate in panels and forums and meetings like the one that you're hosting today. We have an after-action review by the entire staff of LIPA and National Grid to get lessons learned from people who were actually involved in the processes. We will have a review by LIPA's Major Storm Review Panel, that's an independent, expert panel of out-of-state utility experts, emergency managers, business folks and consumer advocates. We'll have a review by the LIPA Board of Trustees, our Operations Committee is already integrally involved and, in fact, the committee was actually out at the Hicksville Emergency Operations Center to view firsthand. And then we have also set up workshops with the Village Mayors, the Supervisors and the County Executives of Suffolk and Nassau County to discuss firsthand with the Chief Executives of each of those areas how we can better coordinate with their folks. And we'll also be meeting with DPWs and other operational

agencies as we go forward to, again, try to better coordinate. This is all in an effort to, as you said, Chairman Eddington, to find out how we can do things better. And we are very much willing to and look forward to working with each of you and the rest of the folks on Long Island to help us better coordinate and work with all the entities involved. So thank you.

MR. BRUCKNER:

Thank you, Mike. You know, the only thing I would add is I have detail on each one of them and would go quite a ways and, you know, certainly answer any questions, but just to talk a little bit about the preparation beforehand. Mike talked about us preparing for the storm and the week ahead. Storm preparation actually starts a year in advance. Our storm preparation efforts really combine not only getting the system prepared for storm season, but also the personnel. So what I'd like to do is just talk a little bit about the personnel preparation, many of the people behind the scenes that made such an extraordinary operational effort possible.

You know, in the T and D organization or the electric organization at Nation Grid on Long Island, there's about eleven hundred people. For a storm of this magnitude, we need well in excess of fifty-one hundred people, or 5,000 people on the ground here to support that storm effort. Those personnel come from our gas organization, which Mr. DeMarinis will speak to, it comes from our power plant organization and also our shared service organizations throughout National Grid as far as corporate services. A year in advance, those individuals all wear a second hat. So we have 5,000 people at National Grid on the ground here in the downstate area that wear two hats; one is their normal day job, whether they're an accountant or a mechanic or an attorney, and their second hat is a storm restoration hat. So during the course of the preceding year, all of those individuals partake in training where they have assigned jobs. And many of you heard during the last week about damage assessment; many of these people are trained to be damage assessors, go out into the field during the event, identify the damage, record it, bring it back to their local control. We do that as classroom training, we also do it out in the field. Many times, between the periods of March and June, during the course of the year, you'll see people in and around, walking up and down the streets, walking through backyards, inspecting those lines; that's in addition to our normal inspections, that's to train these people to identify those damages.

In addition to that, we have people that wear second hats such as in our gas organization. Those individuals who work on gas mains and gas services during the course of a year get trained to work on electrical work. They work on the house services, some of the distribution lines in the street, some of the lower voltage work. People in our power plants, when they're not running the power plant, we pull them out to do training to do transmission line inspections. So when there's a storm, we have them out walking the transmission lines; it's the only way to identify it by a ground line inspection. So they go out and they inspect it and we train them as to what to look for, what type of damage, how to prioritize that damage and come back in, again, to the divisional consults to give us an idea of what we have out there.

So there's a tremendous amount of training that goes on well before we track, in this case Hurricane Irene, to get the workforce prepared to wear their second hat. During the course of the year, we do encounter many storms where certain facets of that training is called into play. Some of you may recall the Great Neck storm that happened last year, we had the March storm last year. Some of those storms may not have gotten to the magnitude of Hurricane Irene, but as we encounter those type of storms, that same workforce is asked to put on a second hat, wear the -- work the 16-hour days that Mike spoke to and come in and support the restoration efforts.

In addition to those 5,000 people, we also have the off-Island resources, which I'll talk to a little later, that come on in the form of linemen and tree trimmers which, again, is an extension of their typical job as they go throughout the country. From a personnel standpoint, that's what we do to prepare, well in advance of the week prior that Mike spoke to.

As far as the system, the system preparation for storms actually, again, takes place at the conclusion of the storm period the preceding year. So from the third quarter of last year to present day, there's a tremendous amount of not only capital investment but operational O&M investment on to the system in the way of, you know, an extensive tree-trim program, line maintenance program, we upgrade the poles on the system, we upgrade equipment in our substations and on the transform -- the transmission systems. All of that investment, to the tune of about \$300 million a year, is to improve the system, make it more reliable, and also invest in the system for storm hardening as well.

Again, the system and the investments in those systems is not only to address the load issues each year and the additional load, but it's also to prepare it for the storm season. On the O&M side, I spoke to tree-trim, but there's also line maintenance that takes place, again, the preceding nine months before the start of the storm season. So everything that is done is predicated on getting the system and the personnel prepared for when the storms hit.

I will say that, you know, I'm very proud of the men and women at National Grid and LIPA and their preparedness and their restoration and their efforts towards storms. I will say that it has led to very good performance on the system. The LIPA system, you know, is known for its reliability in the State as far as overhead utilities, and that investment of personnel and resources has certainly earned itself as being the highest performing overhead system in New York State, and it's on a non-storm basis. During storms, our restoration time is far greater than any other New York State overhead utility. So clearly, the performance, you know, speaks for the preparation and the investment that LIPA has made on the system.

As far as the event itself, I would agree with Mike that much needs to be done in the way of communication. The way I break down a storm, there's three phases to a storm; there's preparation, there's restoration and there's lessons learned. On the restoration phase, there's operational performance and then there's communication performance. I think there's -- in both areas, there's always areas to improve. I think from an operational perspective we talk about -- you know, I know it was mentioned here in this meeting already about the acquisition of off-Island crews; there's always work that can be done around refining that process and identifying the need for crews and when you can get them; we could talk about that as well. There's a lesson learned there as well. But I think in this particular storm, I think we really need to focus on what could be done better in the way of communications.

I truly believe that there's more information from the various stakeholders that's available, whether it's our surveys in the field, our construction personnel, our operations personnel, LIPA senior management, National Grid senior management, and between us all and the work that we do with the Counties and the elected officials, there's a better story that we could put together for the customers to keep them engaged, and I think that's what this forum will do is lead us down that road.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. Are you from -- were you with Verizon?

P.O. LINDSAY:

He's the gas guy.

MR. DeMARINIS:

No, I'm National Grid, Gas Operations.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. I'll just give you guys the opportunity, is there anything else that you wanted to add?

MR. DeMARINIS:

It's Bob DeMarinis, I'm Vice-President of Gas Operations for National Grid, responsible for gas operations in the State of New York.

Yeah, I would like to just quickly speak a little bit about what we do about gas operations. Because before I'm able to support LIPA and the electric restoration efforts, my first responsibility is to make sure that the safe and reliable service of natural gas to our customers is satisfied first. So we have the same preparations. We run a hurricane drill each year, we participate in one just for the gas infrastructure as well as well as we participate with LIPA in theirs. You know, one of the first things that we do is we make sure -- because in a hurricane or tropical storm situations, we make sure that based on the track even earlier with regards to impact to Long Island, what might be the impacts on our supply portfolio. We get natural gas, we have a very diverse portfolio from the north, the west and from the south and the Gulf of Mexico. So we're in pretty good shape with regards to the impact of storms no matter where they occur.

So for something like this, though, the natural gas system, it's really all about water and keeping water out of our infrastructure. So for something like this, we are very concerned with the tides, when the tides and the tidal surges may occur. So as part of our preparation, we put people out into very strategic areas where we know we've got low lying flood areas that could impact our gas infrastructure. We valve out regulator stations which take high pressure gas and convert it to a lower pressure which goes to the homes. We valve out some of the ones that we know are in flood-prone areas ahead of time, so that was done in preparation for the storm.

Our people, as the storm approaches, get ready, just as you've heard Mike and John describe, not only the training but the physical, making sure that our equipment is up and ready to go at the time of impact. We have an Emergency Operations Center that we staff 24-hours a day and we did man starting Sunday morning at 6 AM. We put people in to the EOC's. Very close relationship in New York City because I have a large workforce in New York City that actually we tap to come to Long Island and vice versa, so we really do look at it as an infrastructure and a resource pool for the entire downstate area. I do have an Upstate region as well where we have manpower that is trained to do emergency restoration as well.

(*Legislator Horsley entered the meeting at 10:36 A.M. *)

Unfortunately, in this particular situation, we're still dealing with some of the record floods in Upstate, New York, so we were not able to tap those resources for this particular event. We still have infrastructure issues that we're dealing with right now in Upstate, New York, as we speak.

So we put people out actually during the storm in strategic areas to keep an eye on the water. And we have very strategic locations where if we have to, we will valve out the infrastructure and actually shut the gas off to our customers if we do have the potential for water infiltration. In this particular storm, with the preparations that we did and with a little bit of luck, we had very little impact to our gas infrastructure. Some of the things that we do as a lessons learned over prior storms is we have a very close relationship with the municipalities, where we have floods. They did a great job coming out to try and help our customers pump water off, number one, the streets that could impact our mains and services, but also the basements. A lot of the heating equipment is in the basements, and we have to turn a customer off until that equipment is deemed that it's safe again. So we worked real close with the municipalities and their Department of Public Works as well as the fire departments to make sure that, you know, the flooding could be kept to a minimum. And in this particular storm, like I said, we did real well.

The other thing that happens in a hurricane, trees come over. And when the trees come over, sometimes, based on the root system, they pull our services up as well and we have gas leaks. So we put people out in strategic areas as well so that we can respond to those gas leaks as quickly as

possible, and in this case it worked phenomenal.

We only ended up losing fourteen gas customers in New York City, mostly in the Staten Island area. We were very concerned with Staten Island, Red Hook, Brooklyn and an area called Seagate towards Coney Island, the lower part of Brooklyn, and we fared very, very well with regards to the flooding.

So the good news was Monday morning our gas infrastructure was in very good shape. We were able to dedicate those more than 1,000 people that have been trained to wear that second hat and to assist LIPA in electric restoration and some of the rolls that they provide. Not only hanging up services to homes, and we're one of the only few utilities that have gas workers that were actually trained to do that, but we also provide an awful lot of physical assist, is what we call it. We're out there working ahead of the crews, removing debris, working with the municipalities, trying to stay ahead, keeping the streets clear, so we do a lot of debris removal, as well material and logistic needs that we provide to our counterparts in electric as well.

So, you know, as far as lessons learned, not much from the gas system; held up very well. We are replacing our low pressure and leak-prone pipe system that's out there. The more that we invest and get rid of it, the less we have to worry about water infiltration. So the more you can do to help reduce permit costs for us to be out there replacing these mains in the streets would be great, and we're working real close with the municipalities to do that.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Well, thank you very much. Yeah, my neighbors were wondering when we're going to get more gas in Medford, but I said I don't know who to talk to; okay, now I've got a face (laughter).

Okay. Now, I think what I've heard from this group here is basically that you've done what you can do, you're seeing that there needs to be improvements in communication. The problem with meetings like that is we all shake our heads and agree and then we go our way and nothing happens. I have a Public Safety -- my next Public Safety meeting is October 6th; at that time, I am going to let my committee know what we've done to establish a better communication. As I read the Executive Order, you hear that the Deputy -- the County Executive and the Deputy County Executive are supposed to be helping to oversee the coordination. I'm sure that the Deputy County Executive will be kept in the loop by the County Executive, I'm making that assumption. I'm letting you know that I am not kept in the loop by the Executive Branch. So that as the Chair of Public Safety, currently, I'm going to need you to put me on your performance evaluation review tool as a strategy. And I will make sure that everybody in the Legislature is kept up to code, and I'm going to be asking the Presiding Officer to help me with the flow of information from me to everybody else. But I need you to make sure, then, that I'm included -- or the Chair of Public Safety, so me for the next three months -- is kept on what's going on. That's one thing that you can do right now. Okay?

MR. DEERING:

(Nodded head yes).

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

And Michael or whomever, communicate with my office in the next month so that I can reassure that what National Grid and LIPA are doing, we're going to know. Okay, and I see the international sign for yes and I'm happy to hear that.

All right, let me open it up to any quick questions; Legislator Kennedy.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate it. And good morning to all and thank you. Let me just give a couple of comments and then I want to ask a couple of questions, and I'm going to defer to the Chair for furnishing some of this information.

First of all, let me say to you that my area, the 12th Legislative District, as you folks all know, was one of the hardest hit areas that we had throughout the Island. The Smithtown Township area, unfortunately every time we looked at that outage map, was flashing red like a hot tomato. What I would say for me personally, as a Legislator, wound up being a good tool and something that I want to see perfected was that electeds inside telephone number. I wound up on the phone, as you know, Mike, with folks from your municipal section easily somewhere between 70 to 80 times over the course of the seven days, spanning from individual residential customers to actually a couple of businesses. My -- so having that number available for me and for my colleagues, as many of them did as well, I think was a good tool for us to get into you.

Some of the most frequent criticisms I heard were that residential customers were having difficulty getting contact through the 800 number, but oftentimes we were able to make live voice contact, get some status, and there was a degree of certainty that your personnel were carrying that restoration request to folks at an action level. So I'd say that one was a good tool, it needs to be an enhanced tool and something that we're going to, you know, continue to want to work with. It's just the nature of, I think, our ability to be close to the ground, no pun intended, in our Legislative Districts, knowing who's got the degree or the magnitude of concerns.

One of the things I need to know and I think all of us do is your process for establishing critical care customers, and I think that's the term that you used. Because in a couple of cases, I'll speak in particular, I had one street that had a gentleman on a ventilator that took seven days to get restored. Now, he was not on your critical care list, so I can't fault you, but what I can do is say I should be able to know how we get customers on to that priority list that you have. I need to know it, I need to do a better job with it. You communicate it but, again, you're communicating across one point one million customers. So if you're going to give me a little bit of like a utilities 101, I want that to be in the curriculum; how do I go ahead and help get folks put in there.

Another piece that I'd like to know is is my first contact with you folks was actually 8 PM on Sunday night. I myself had no power, I was at a friend's house and I heard about your first need to assess the integrity and the viability of the transmission system. And I said okay, I can understand that, power flows from the top down. But nobody was able to give me, for two plus days, how long it was going to take to establish the integrity of the transmission system before we would move into distribution. So what I've said throughout this process is I don't expect any utility here to be a Houdini, but what I do want to have is something better than "we're working on it," and throughout the course of those first couple of days, that's all I was able to get. So the second thing I'd like to see in the curriculum is is something about transmission system, just at a low level; I'm not an electrician, although I am the son of one.

*(*Laughter*)*

But it's important when we're speaking with our constituents that we have some idea about what we're going to be able to relate.

The decision to do restoration out of substations; I'd like to be able to understand that to a certain extent. I acquiesced to the request to not go to a substation and I'm not -- I don't want to criticize anybody in particular. Actually, the people I finally spoke to on Friday on Brown's Road over in Nesconset were admirable folks. What I saw reminded me of like vintage World War II; it was a large map with a bunch of red circles, pins and things like that as you were, I guess, processing through trying to do repairs on that particular grid. Again, I don't run a utility, I'm just curious, did you go to that because that's the only way that you could do restoration? And I wonder if that was

the best distribution of the resources that you had with your restoration crews.

P.O. LINDSAY:

That's the longest question I've ever heard.

LEG. KENNEDY:

You like it?

P.O. LINDSAY:

Oh, my God. Just ask the question.

LEG. KENNEDY:

I can go on and on.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

And that doesn't have to be answered here, but put that on the list of concerns that we're very verbalizing.

MR. DEERING:

Okay.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Absolutely. I see it now, now we've got a PO that's an electrician, so he's able to throw them off a little bit.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Let him answer the question.

*(*Laughter*)*

LEG. KENNEDY:

I'm asking him questions, Bill, which is basically try to address some of these items that we all dealt with as we went through the process. Ultimately, I'd ask you to just brief us and brief us within a particular time period. Take two weeks, take three weeks, but block out about an hour or two and invite every one of us so that we can have the level of knowledge we need to go forward. Okay, I'll yield.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you. Legislator -- yes, go ahead.

MR. BRUCKNER:

I can respond to most of those. I certainly would need time to go back and get you detail, but I think it would be beneficial if I at least gave a first pass, if that's all right?

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

If you what?

MR. BRUCKNER:

If I could just give a first pass on many of the questions that were asked.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Yeah. Again, I'm trying to say that I'm not requiring answers to questions today, and I've tried to make that clear.

MR. BRUCKNER:

Yes.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

We want you to hear our concerns and we would like, by the next Public Safety Committee meeting, at least how you're going to address those concerns. So I don't even expect you to give a response, really, but I want you to acknowledge that these are the -- if you're seeing the bottom line, it's all about communication. Again, that's what I heard.

MR. BRUCKNER:

That's fine.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator Cilmi.

LEG. CILMI:

Yes. Thanks, Mr. Chairman. Thank you all for being here. A question, a very specific question relative to some of our emergency services. We had in my district and in my area, two different -- as far as I know, two different ambulance companies that were without power for some time. And so rather than -- I don't want to criticize that, but what I want to ask is do you have a system in place, maybe with the help of either Verizon or Cablevision, whereby all of our emergency services folks, be they ambulance companies, fire departments, etcetera, you somehow automatically know when their power goes down so that they can be your first priorities to fix. Is there something that you have, an automatic system where you talk to one another and you know that information?

P.O. LINDSAY:

Can you answer that?

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

I guess a yes and a no could help, I guess.

MR. BRUCKNER:

Yeah. So the answer to that is for a specific customer or -- the answer to the question is no. We do not know if a specific customer is out in most cases, and if I could just explain.

So if a customer's service from the pole to the building goes down, we would not know that that service is out unless the customer called us to notify us. If a -- in the substation, the circuit breaker that feeds that area which is the equipment we have telemetry on or we have, you know, some connection to it, if that circuit breaker opens like many did during that storm, then we do know that all of those customers are out. Right? So from the substation perspective, in each substation you have on average maybe 10 or 12 of those circuit breakers; very similar to the breakers in your home, just larger. If one of those opens up and de-energizes an area, we know all the customers are out in that area. But on an individualized basis, if it's damaged down stream at the customer's level, we would not know unless the customer called.

LEG. CILMI:

To quickly follow-up?

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Sure.

LEG. CILMI:

The -- and it seems to me it would be relatively simple, and maybe I'm wrong, but, you know, you

have a certain number of critical infrastructure points; hospitals, fire departments, ambulance companies, etcetera. Wouldn't it be simple to work with, you know, Verizon or Cablevision or whoever provides the communication service to those entities, to somehow set something up where there's some sort of a trigger, like an alarm system where, you know, if your power goes out in your home and you have an alarm, the alarm company is notified. Something like that.

MR. BRUCKNER:

I would look to my colleagues for that answer, but part of the answer is, you know, it goes down the line of smart metering and the whole idea of smart technology, and that's where it's leading to. Is there a shorter term solution? That's something we will have as a take-away.

LEG. CILMI:

Yeah, if you could talk to your colleagues at the desk there and come back to us. Thanks.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you very much. Okay. So once again, we have not only communication with us, but communication with the people here to facilitate, obviously, a hole in the system. Okay, I have Legislator Gregory.

LEG. GREGORY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I apologize, I missed the majority of your testimony, I got called out to meeting for a few minutes. We've touched on it already and I'll just reiterate it, and if you could just respond to it just for my benefit; I'm sorry if I'm making you repeat yourself. The majority of the concerns that we heard, that my office heard, was about communication. We heard that we're getting more information from the Newsday website, we're getting more information from certain radio stations; how is that possible? And as the frustrations of our constituencies rise, they seem to try to empower us and our capability to effect change for them and we're very limitless in that. But certainly, if we had more information we could be empowered by the ability to inform our constituencies. So I would be interested in hearing what your short-term analysis is of what communication failures there were and maybe where you're looking to go. I know I read some in Newsday about how you -- the logistics may have affected some of the communication, but I'm just interested in hearing a little bit more on that, if you will.

MR. BRUCKNER:

Well, if I understand your question correctly is, you know, the frustration of not hearing some of the information. I know Mike spoke a little bit about that earlier, but, you know, some of the early lessons learned was that -- and I think I elaborated on it as well. The information just was not getting back to two stakeholders specifically, right? We had the elected officials who were not getting a good understanding of --

MS. MAHONEY:

Excuse me one second.

*(*Brief Audio Malfunction*)*

MS. MAHONEY:

Okay, we're good.

MR. BRUCKNER:

We're good? Okay. So, again, I think it's two stakeholders, one is the elected officials and the frustration that we put upon them and the fact that they didn't have information for their constituents, okay, where our crews were, what stage of readiness we were at, where the damage assessment was and so forth. And then the second thing is the customer asking, you know, "When am I going to be back on," and asking in many cases two people, us and our contact center, and we

didn't have the answer for that. And then two, they would go back to their elected officials who were equally frustrated, not only not knowing the answer, but not having the details of what was going on in the process. And I think from a lessons learned, both of them require two different answers. One is the information that we have across our internal stakeholders, whether it was damage assessors and divisional operations or in the substations, there's enough information out there that we need to try to get back and put in a useable form that we can get out here proactively, and that's one of the things we're working on the ground now to do.

I do believe that there was enough information in aggregate that could certainly put the elected officials in a better position, the municipalities in a better position, you know, the EOCs in a better position to respond to a lot, not with a definitive answer of when your lights will be on but where we are in the process, which I think would certainly go a long way compared to where we were in this event. So there's a lot of work to focus on that.

Just in communications, I do want to respond back to the substation issue because I think it goes to this point. There was a concern earlier that, you know, why do we operate out of the substations. You know, the operation out of a substation really is twofold, and it is information and that's why I bring it up here, it's about information. The number one priority of putting people into substations is not a drive to be archaic in operations. The number one drive is, again, we don't know specifically why a customer is out of service unless we have eyes on the ground that can identify what the damage is. So the number one priority of manning those substations with surveyors is to have people on the ground to actually drive or walk out the lines to find out the specific location of damage locations and bring that information back. Now, is there technology out there that would provide a faster means of getting that back? Perhaps the medium that we use we could look to, you know, improvements along the way, but right now there's no substitute for eyes on the ground to tell us where that damaged location is. So that information comes back to the substations, gets rolled up at the substation or aggregated and brought back into the divisions so that we can identify where do the crews then get assigned. You know, where is the most significant damage that we can restore and bring back the greatest number of customers quicker.

So I do think it goes to a little bit about the substation. The other aspect of the substation, which I won't get into here but we will certainly look at it as a lessons learned is they do at times -- we do put crews into those substations at times and actually run a restoration effort from the substation. Different logistical issue but, you know, that's not really a communication type of concern now, that's an operational concern, we can discuss that at further meetings as well.

LEG. GREGORY:

Okay, thank you for your response. I come from a military background where we strongly believe and it's the culture of the military to have top-down planning and bottom-up revision, and it's very structured and it seems, in a similar way, structured the way you have with your substations. And it's important and I understand the importance that you have people on the ground that can do an assessment and feed that information up so you can prioritize your resources, so that you can address those priorities in an efficient way, but somehow it doesn't seem like that happened. But I think with our technology -- and I'm sure you guys will go through that process. There's certainly room for improvement, and I hope with that, that there's an improvement with communication to us as well as the other stakeholders that were less than adequately kept in the loop on certain things. So thank you for your presence here today, it means a lot.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator Browning.

LEG. BROWNING:

Yeah, I think mine are fairly simple. When we came back to work, half of my office had power, the

other did not. And I know that there was a number of people who had asked that question. Is that a dangerous situation or, you know, is it just something went wrong somewhere on the pole, but we're safe. Because I'm saying to my office, "I don't know, I think we're okay," you know.

P.O. LINDSAY:

It's an electrical problem. I'll explain it to you.

*(*Laughter*)*

LEG. BROWNING:

Oh, okay. So is it something that we can stay in our office and it's not a problem?

MR. BRUCKNER:

You know, every situation is different. It would be irresponsible for me to say what the damage was not having seen it, whether it was safe or not. I will answer a similar question, if it would be helpful; you know, "why are my lights on", or "why are my lights out and my neighbor's are on?"

LEG. BROWNING:

Uh-huh.

MR. BRUCKNER:

Which is a typical question. So if you would, I'll answer that first and then I'll go back to your specific situation.

LEG. BROWNING:

It's more just of constituent calls, because we had a lot of calls. You know, I have the Mastic Beach and the Smith Point area where a lot of them lost electricity. And you know, I had heard also other residents where they said part of their home had electricity but the other part didn't. Do you tell them to leave or do you tell, "You're okay, stay home"?

MR. BRUCKNER:

Well, let me answer it this way. No, I don't tell them to leave. You know, it is routine that you will have a part-light situation, which that is, so in a home or in an office, some of the building will have power, some will not. You certainly should call the call center and report it and we would have a serviceman respond.

Typically, when you're at a house, the reason why that happens is there's two energized-feeds that come to the house and the neutral -- I apologize if I'm getting into it too much, but there's two energized-feeds, when you see the braided wire go to the house. If one of those connections on those two hot legs that come in breaks off, only half the house will have power. Very similar, to a great extent, on a commercial building; if one of the hot leads coming into the building loses power because a cable fails or something like that, you know, only part of the building will have power. Is it a safety concern? Typically no in a home it's not a safety concern, but some of your equipment at home, whether it's you know, an electric stove or something like that would not work because you would only have half of it. And in a commercial building, is it a concern? Could be a concern to some large rotating equipment, you know, it could be a concern from, you know, an operational performance perspective or damaging the equipment, but I wouldn't suggest that it's a safety concern. Now, if one of those legs is burned off and it, you know, potentially could have a fire because of it, well, then certainly there is, but we don't tell people to leave their facilities because of that.

LEG. BROWNING:

Okay. Thank you. You know, my Aide, she was in one of the areas in Moriches where they were

told to evacuate, and I will say that they do not have overhead power lines; they never lost their electricity. So there has to be something said about having the power lines buried.

Another issue with the telephone poles, or I call them utility poles, that came down. I know they do belong, and I guess Verizon hasn't spoken yet, but when those poles come down, do you coordinate with Verizon? Because I know we have had this issue in the past and, you know, you're busy trying to get people's electricity up and running. So if a pole comes down, who's putting up the pole; do you guys just go ahead and do it?

MR. BRUCKNER:

So -- it's a great question. So when the poles come down, you know, we have resources at LIPA National Grid that we use to put the poles up. In an event light like this, those resources are better served putting the lights back on and putting wire back up. You know, my hats go off to the men and women at Verizon, because I have to say, in this event, they exceeded our expectations as far as support. They were tremendous, getting poles out there, putting poles up, pre-staging, the coordination at our divisional level. While I would agree there's always room for improvement, that's an area where I'm not sure how much more we can improve with the support we got from Verizon in this event.

LEG. BROWNING:

Okay, thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. Legislator Anker.

LEG. ANKER:

Hi. Thank you for being here and helping us understand what we can do to improve the situation so it doesn't happen again. And again, you know, all I can say is let this not be like Katrina. If we had a Category 3 or 4 hurricane, we wouldn't be here today. I don't know where we would be. But we need to focus again on how we can make the situation better.

I thought that's a great idea, again, as far as tracking. We need to -- we, we all need to figure out a way to track these outages. You know, again, I wasn't informed. I'm a new Legislator and I thought it was just me that wasn't getting information or I needed to contact someone. I physically went to the Suffolk County Emergency Center in Yaphank to find out more and they have a center right there and they have everything all ready, the fire department, the ambulance, every entity in Suffolk County. And LIPA was there and LIPA showed me how to go to the storm tracking and find out where the areas had outages down.

Now, my problem was I have people in my area, I'm on the north shore and a huge amount of damage in that area and a lot of power outages. Some of those folks have well water. They didn't have -- and they lost electricity for a week. They didn't have water for a week, showers, drinking water, you know, cooking. After three or four days, when I found out about those people, and those are people that I went to their homes to find out, found out about that. Also, I heard on WBLI, I heard it on the radio, a woman from Mount Sinai call in, you know, "I don't have water. What's happening?" Again, the communication is so important and we all want to help our constituents, our customers. And if we could just network and create a better process of understanding, how we can help each other. So again, tracking.

Again, off the top of my head, I'm not an electrician, my father was an electrical engineer. But can you get a transmitter, a satellite transmitter on some of the transformers? If they're cold, that means they're not working. You know, is there a way we can think out of the box? Is there a way we can go to other companies in other states, in other countries to find out how we can locate what's on and what's off. I know nuclear facilities can do this. Let's see if we can find a way very

quickly -- you know, hopefully before this hurricane season is over, just in case -- to find out how we can locate the outages faster so we can facilitate the help needed.

Prioritizing. Again, just a suggestion and questions combined. How do you prioritize? I know there were people in my district, elderly people, I have one of the largest senior communities in Suffolk County, and we need to make sure those people in need are at the top of the list. So again, something, please consider that, you know, when you evaluate the situation.

The thirty substations or so. You know, again, you have them there to react to the area specifically where the outages are down, definitely more coordination with the communication part, and especially bringing Suffolk County in that, seeing that we do have the emergency center. And again, every town had a computer, every -- the Police had a computer. They all have their 30 or 40 different entities where they were collaborating, networking, getting that information out, getting the help out needed. Suffolk Water Authority, met people there, they have something called a water buffalo and I found out about it at that place, I ordered one, it was in my district ready for free water to be distributed within that day. So again, this is, you know, important information.

I do want to commend, though, your workers across the line, all the utility workers that worked very hard during the situation. They probably personally did not have electricity, they probably personally had a very rough time, but they were out on the road, they were doing their jobs and there was some negative activity, I'm sure, that they had to experience. So I definitely want to thank your workers for keeping on the job and doing what they're supposed to do to help us. And again, thank you for coming here and listening to our concerns.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay, thank you. I'd like to get our resident electrician, Presiding Officer to ask questions.

P.O. LINDSAY:

I'm going to be really quick, because there's a whole bunch of people here that I want to hear from. I know there's some shelter providers here, the Red Cross I think is here, some of our emergency service people as well as the Verizon people. So I just have three quick questions, guys. How many people did we peak out at restoration and when did that occur?

MR. BRUCKNER:

During the event itself it was 523,000.

P.O. LINDSAY:

No, I didn't say outages. How many restoration people did you have on the ground --

MR. BRUCKNER:

Oh.

P.O. LINDSAY:

-- and when did you hit that peak amount?

MR. BRUCKNER:

Subject to check, I'd have to get the actual numbers. I don't know if, Mike, you have the actual numbers for all of them. We had over seventy-five people on the ground working. I'll get you -- you know, I'll follow-up with details as far as high voltage personnel.

P.O. LINDSAY:

I'm not asking for specifics. I'm just asking how many people did we peak? So you had

seventy-five hundred on restoration.

MR. BRUCKNER:

Yeah.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Which is, what, triple your normal work force?

MR. BRUCKNER:

Oh, for more than that. Far more than that. The T and D --

P.O. LINDSAY:

Don't you have normally 2,000?

MR. BRUCKNER:

Yeah, the T and D organization is made up, or the electric organization at National Grid here on Long Island has about eleven hundred people.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Okay.

MR. BRUCKNER:

So, you know, and then there's shared services such as, you know, the back office support, but for the most part it's eleven hundred strong.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Okay. How far away did they come from?

MR. BRUCKNER:

Well, the linemen came as far as Colorado, Texas, you know, out in the west and --

P.O. LINDSAY:

Did we do everything we can to use local labor?

MR. BRUCKNER:

You know, that issue just came up this morning. As far as everyone that was on the bench with Local 1049 was used, whether it was physical assist or what have you.

P.O. LINDSAY:

We have a bunch of electricians that do street lighting, that do traffic signals that are used to working on secondary, they weren't used at all. They're Long Island residents, they live here.

MR. BRUCKNER:

You know, that question came up before the meeting. I'll certainly take a look at that. I know we reached in to the Long Island Railroad and got support from the Railroad as well, but I'll have to take a look at -- we'll investigate that as far as local labor as well.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Are you guys comfortable that you's did everything you can, tree trimming-wise to prevent the number of outages that we had?

MR. BRUCKNER:

Yeah, I would say as far as our tree trimming effort, you know, we -- the answer to that question is

yes. This wasn't a tree trimming issue. We didn't have branches necessarily come down, we had trees come down, so you're really talking about a tree removal program.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Okay. Okay, that's really all I want. If you guys say you were comfortable with the tree trimming effort, that's fine by me.

MR. BRUCKNER:

Tree trimming during a normal day, other than a storm like Irene, but during a normal day, tree trimming accounts for about 30% of the outages that occur in the system. During an event like Irene, it accounts for over 90% of the outages. As I said earlier, I do believe that our tree trimming practices is the main reason why, as I stated earlier, the reliability of LIPA's system is the best in the State for overhead utilities. Could it be improved? It's something that we always have to maintain that balance between reliability of tree trim and the aesthetic concerns that your constituents and LIPA's customers have. So that's a balance that always needs to be maintained, but certainly something we can continue to look at.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Okay, that's great. And just to my colleagues, I got a call on Monday from Joe Williams in the afternoon about they were going to have -- when FRES realized how bad a situation we had, that there was going to be daily briefings, so from Tuesday on I had someone from my staff attend. What we'll do is we'll set up a network of passing that on so the onus isn't only on the utility, the onus is on us to get as much information to each one of you guys, for one simple reason, and I hope you realize this. Is when anything goes wrong people call us. I mean, I had people calling, "When are you going to get my lights back on," you know. So, you know, it's a good conduit to pass information on to our constituents and we're going to try and set up a network to make that more effective.

MR. BRUCKNER:

And I think we have a lot to do to get you that information, but it's certainly, as you mentioned, a conduit that I mentioned earlier that would serve us very well. You know, the more information we can get to yourselves, the more information that you have when your constituents call and put you in a better position. So I do appreciate that opportunity.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator Horsley.

LEG. HORSLEY:

Yeah, good morning, guys, and thank you for being here. I appreciate your being here today.

I want to just quickly mention a couple of things. First of all, Ms. Anker, Legislator Anker's comment about the linemen; they truly did a yeoman's job. They did 110%. I saw them out there, you know, in spite of the calls that said that they weren't there. I recognize that the men and women who were out there in the field, they really -- they were working hard and they were doing the people's business and I appreciate that.

I have some -- you know, and I wasn't going to even question today, but just because it came up. First of all, the concept that Ms. Anker was talking about and Legislator Cilmi of Smart Grid, you guys, LIPA has been talking about this for more years than I can recall. And it's been on your agenda, it's been in conversation, it's going to be on the 110 and it's going to -- you know, it's going to be the future of LIPA. And from there, from Smart Grid to emergency e-mailing, a program that was promised by LIPA and others, it seems to me that somewhere we dropped the ball, and that conversation has to be -- has to be made, and that's one point I would like to make.

But secondly, in talking to some of your trustees and others within the organization, there was a concern that the substations that I understand were at last minute sandbagged and put sand bags out in front of the substations to protect them, that they are a vital component of your system and that they were -- that if they had gone down, this could have been far worse. And is there -- moving forward, is there a program to make sure that they are protected, first and foremost, so that we can get to the restoration if there is a disaster in Suffolk and Long Island. Those two issues I thought were something that I think you guys should address and have the public know about and what your plans are, and maybe if you can comment towards that end. Thanks.

MR. BRUCKNER:

So I will comment about the Smart Grid concept and then I'll let Mike follow-up on -- with specifics about where LIPA's going with Smart Grid, and then I will talk about the sand bagging of the substation and that potential concern.

From a Smart Grid perspective, there's many facets to Smart Grid, I couldn't define them all here. What I will say is that LIPA's distribution system, which does incorporate quite a bit of smart technology, probably one of the leaders in distribution automation presently on the system, does give us the ability of smart switches and information back and forth that talks between the substations and some of the equipment that they have in the field, and I would put it at a pretty high level in the industry. When it goes down to the customer's perspective and the information that we get from a specific customer that's been brought out, I'll let Mike address that what LIPA's direction is there.

As far as sandbagging the substations, we do have, or LIPA does have an investment program with respect to storm hardening which includes storm surge, and many substations have had some work in them when you look at the projected storm surge to get some of that equipment out of the storm surge area. Raising the foundations that some of the equipment is on, you know, a foot, two feet, three feet to get it out of a category 3 scenario, some of that work has taken place. LIPA continues to evaluate those investments.

The information you talk about with sandbagging some of the control houses or switch gear at some of the substations for this event, it did take place as a precautionary measure when we looked at the potential tidal surges coming quite a bit up on the south shore. As a matter of fact, we even had some on the north shore that were a concern, but that was really done as a precautionary. There wasn't -- based on the forecast, there wasn't an eminent danger that the substations were going to go under water, but as a concern we didn't want splashing, we didn't want any of that kind of water infiltration. So we did do a precautionary and it was the first time we've sandbagged switch gear and around the foundation to prevent that, very similar to what many other organizations did. But we are, to answer your question, continuing to review storm surge and what that impact to the system could be.

LEG. HORSLEY:

Could be.

MR. BRUCKNER:

Could be.

LEG. HORSLEY:

Tragic for everyone

MR. BRUCKNER:

Yes.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator Anker.

LEG. ANKER:

Okay, real quick question, I know we have a lot of people here today. The main issue it seems like with the storm was the fact that the wind caused the large trees to fall due to the wet soil, that was the main issue. I'd like to know how much it would cost to -- or are you -- let me ask you, are you considering a plan to bury the lines? Because the amount of money that was put forth just in the storm alone, the amount of money that's put forth to cut tree limbs, there's a lot of money going towards lines above the ground. What's your future plans to putting lines underground?

MR. DEERING:

This has come up a number of times, and I know we continually -- we continually assess the opportunity and we are doing under-grounding in certain locations as new developments come up and go forward.

The cost to under-grounding all the lines on Long Island is quite substantial, in the billions of dollars, as well as just the infrastructure that would be necessary to do that. So I think it's something we continue to look at, but the cost at this time to put the complete system under ground is very prohibitive.

The other issue with under-grounding is you can't use under-grounding effectively in some of the high water table areas. So there are some trade-offs that we're going to have with technology that we have right now. So it's something we continue to look at, continue to review.

The other part of under-grounding that people should be aware of is while they may not go out as frequently due to storms and things such as that, when they do go out it does take longer to restore. It takes longer to identify where those issues are and then to go into restoration. So there is a trade-off there.

LEG. ANKER:

Okay. And just one other word I want to put out there; wireless technology. I've seen it, I know it, it's out there. I don't know where LIPA, National Grid, KeySpan, where you guys are with that, but I'm hoping to see that, you know, used by your companies in the future. Thank you.

MR. DEERING:

Yeah. As --

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. You know what? I'm going to stop right here for a minute. I was going to try to have the flow go by each group and then have questions. As you can see, Legislators always have a follow-up and a follow-up, and we have 15 other people that are going to speak. So I'm going to change the format right now and ask for Verizon and cable to just give us what you did so you can -- you may have forgotten where our goal was. We had one for an hour and a half. What you felt you accomplished, what you are looking to change to improve services, and I don't even remember anymore what the other one was, but you know what I'm saying.

MS. GILROY:

Lessons learned.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

And how can we help you. Okay? And then when we're done we'll have questions. Thank you.

MS. AZIZ:

Thank you, Chairman. Good morning, all. Again, I'm Wajeeha Aziz, I'm the Director of Operations for Suffolk County, so I have customer --

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

If I could get you to just speak -- I have a little problem with my hearing.

MS. AZIZ:

Okay. Can you hear me better?

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Yes.

MS. AZIZ:

Okay. All right, I'm Wajeeha Aziz, I have responsibility for customer operations in Suffolk County for Verizon. And so let me just take you through some of the prep work that we do.

This -- as we are a public utility, this is something that we do a number of times a year as we plan for weather events and other events, so this is not new to us. In this case, we started tracking the storm about a week in advance, and the first thing that we do is make sure that we have the resources, our personnel available to apply towards restoration efforts. So we curtailed any kind of proactive work that we would do normally, construction work that we would do. In addition, we capped all the installation activity to put as many people as we could towards clearing out any outages to start with so that we would be in the best position possible to put customers back into service. We were successful in reducing our customer trouble load, if you will, 21% during that work in preparation for the storm. On Saturday we had an all-out, hands-on-deck effort to further reduce the load and make sure that we were as clean as we possibly could be going into the storm. In addition, my peer here, and he will get an opportunity to speak as well, we worked very closely with National Grid on coordinating our efforts. We had a number of conference calls with them during that week just to solidify how we would be communicating with one another. The topics ranged anywhere from evaluating what resources and hardware we had on-hand so that we could help one another out should the need arise, poles, drop-wires and the like. We also made plans to have our engineers located at the National Grid substations for better coordination.

We made sure that we had inventory on hand to be able to address any problems, that would mean we had ordered additional poles, took inventory of what we had, made sure there was a pipeline coming in post hurricane as well if we needed it, drop-wire, hardware and so on. We also made sure that we had generators. As you know, when commercial power goes out, our central offices are also without power and that's where a dial tone is generated. Many people do not know that if they have plain old telephone service served on copper, they actually do have telephone service when the power lines go out. And in order -- only, though, if the central offices are up and running, so we made sure that those critical infrastructure had alternative power sources and that we had other mobile power source units ready to go such as our electronic manholes to continue to power the infrastructure in the event that there were commercial outages.

We also protected our critical infrastructure; again, those central offices are so critical. We took a look at the north surge zone information, the slosh information, and made sure that our central offices that were prone to flooding in low-lying areas were sandbagged, and we did have back-up power there available. Also, in many of the areas we have what we call controlled environment vaults, they are underground, they provide electronics. We made sure that those in low-lying areas, especially those that served Police Departments and hospitals and such, were sand-bagged and that we kept, you know, close vigilance on those.

We also made sure -- because, again, just like National Grid, our restoration efforts would start post the event, so we wanted to make sure that all of our personnel could get to work and the trucks would roll. So we made sure we canceled any kind of vacations that we could cancel, we made sure that folks had alternative report locations in case our Verizon buildings sustained structural damage and that we could not dispatch from there. We made sure that critical personnel, decision-making personnel had access to alternative communications in the event there were cell outages and wireless communications were down, etcetera.

And of course we did the usual making sure that our vehicles were gassed up so that post hurricane we could have our fleet out en masse to address any issues. We also made -- because we had so many portable generators out there to power up our electronics, we made sure that we had mobile -- made arrangements for mobile fuel units to come down, knowing -- from out of area, knowing that some of our gas stations, you know, that would be on commercial power would not be able to provide us the fuel that we needed. So those were a lot of the efforts prior to the hurricane. On the night of the hurricane we had -- we actually had a handful of folks out during the hurricane as commercial power started to go down. We have our air compressors that are -- and dryers that are typically in the central offices, those -- when we lose commercial power, they start to power down; they are critical because our infrastructure and our cables are very susceptible to water. They keep the air on major cables so that we can keep the water out, and so as soon as those alarms started to register for us, we did dispatch technicians out to those locations just to make sure that our generators were up and working and that we would continue to have a flow of air to our critical feeds.

On the morning after the storm, we did have a lot of -- our real restoration, though, started on Monday. We did have a lot of feet on the street in the form of engineers and managers out to do what we could to assess the damage. As I stated before, we had representatives in each of the LIPA sub -- excuse me, the National Grid substations, and then we had our own command center where the engineers were coordinating closely with our contacts in those substations. So there was two-way communication. As we were doing surveys, we were also feeding that information back to National Grid so that in some areas, even though for the most part we wait for the power company to take the lead and make sure that it's safe for our workers to go in there, in some situations we do have to work together to put communities back in service and so that was closely coordinated between us. Not too many issues there.

We also -- most people, when they're out of power, are more concerned about their power situation and don't always call in their telephone complaint until after they have power, so we knew that we would -- the incoming for our load would continue to build as those customers were restored to power. We also know that our customers today have cell phones that they can utilize and, in fact, the cell phone infrastructure did hold up pretty well and folks were able to communicate. As the days went on into the restoration, we took a look at the load that was coming in for us and we assessed that we couldn't keep up with this building load, so then at that point we would declare what internally to Verizon is known as a state of emergency. It does differ in your definition of emergency; for us it really speaks to the contractual issue of how much overtime we can assign to an individual. We do have caps normally, per the provisions of our contract, but in situations where we find there are mass outages and we can't keep up, we can invoke a state of emergency and that would allow us to get the force that we need and the hours that we need to clear the work. We did do that on September 1st. We did -- and our load did peak around September 2nd and it was still high on September 3rd after which point we started to see the customer trouble load come down. At this time, we are not normal, still high, but certainly half of where we were at that time.

So subject to your questions --

P.O. LINDSAY:

Yeah, I've got a question.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

You know what? You were out of the room. I'm going to just have Cablevision go, because we spent an hour-and-a-half on one group, I have fourteen other speakers.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Okay.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

So if we just let Joan go quickly, then just hold on to your question.

MS. GILROY:

Thank you, Chairman Eddington. I did hand in my complete statement to the Deputy Clerk, so I'm going -- because of the time frame, I'm going to abbreviate some of this for you.

The fact is is that Cablevision's plant in the field which brings television programming to the Long Island homes is supported by commercial power. So it was important for us very early on to communicate clearly to our customers that if they lost electrical power at their location, then they would lose cable service also. While our network has battery, backed-up power that lasts several hours, when a storm of major proportions like Irene hits in massive power outages, then the cable service is likely to also be interrupted. So, therefore, we encouraged customers to call us if the power to their location had been restored but their cable service was not operational. It was at that time we were able to determine the outages, and this allowed us to target our repair efforts more efficiently.

As we anticipated, in assessing the actual impact of the storm, the majority of our service interruptions occurred as a result of the interruption in electrical power. As electricity returned, our customers were able to assess Cablevision -- were able to access, I'm sorry, were able to access Cablevision services almost immediately. More infrequently but in some instances, power restoration at customers' homes did not immediately result in this return of Optimum services. And why? Because the cable distribution equipment which is located on the poles and on the streets, such as our nodes and our amplifiers which power the delivery of the programming services to the home, also require electric power to operate. So where electrical power interruptions affected this equipment, we deployed back-up generators to power this equipment at the site in order to restore service to impacted homes as quickly as possible.

Coordination with LIPA significantly helped us. We immediately realized that very early on in the storm and we kept close communication, daily communication with LIPA. By identifying particular areas where LIPA was working to restore power, we were able to deploy crews behind them where conditions were safe to restore power as expeditiously as possible. Cablevision facilities in Suffolk County were never down since we have back-up power generators. Our head-ends and call centers were fully operational throughout the storm. And in reference to what Legislator Anker mentioned, we did find that our Optimum WiFi, which is our satellite WiFi, was a lifeline for customers who did not have power. And we saw a very high use on Sunday and right into the week where people were using, our customers were using Optimum WiFi as their lifeline and they were getting service to on-line, they were getting -- they were able to receive and send e-mails in these particular areas. And the down areas, train stations, platforms, already have the WiFi, it did wind up being a help.

In anticipation of the storm, Cablevision spent hours preparing. Firstly, staffing levels of all call centers were increased in order to fill the significant volume of calls reporting outages. Because of this staffing measure and this staffing increase, we were able to deploy technicians aggressively to affected communities in an effort to restore service as quickly as possible. Cablevision staff, both in the field and at our customer service call centers, worked around the clock in the aftermath of Irene and even through the recent holiday weekend to continue with response and restoration. In addition, in preparation we deployed generators at major distribution and customer response

centers, and we mobilized crews from outside of the area to ensure that service disruptions would be minimized.

We were very proactive in our communication to our customers to keep them informed of the storm's impact. We used automated response centers at the call centers and this helped to minimize call volume and wait time to speak with a representative. We e-mailed messages, various messages to our customers, we took out full-page ads in Newsday, and we communicated directly, my office communicated directly with the ten Town Supervisors and we kept them informed, asking them questions if they knew of any critical locations, whether it was hospitals, nursing homes, etcetera, so I was in contact directly with all the Town Supervisors on that.

What did we do, what can we do to improve? Lessons learned. Chairman, I can tell you that as soon as I get back to my office, your phone number is going to be on speed dial and I will keep -- personally keep contact with you in the future on any situation like this, we will keep you on our list.

The other thing we also learned is, as I mentioned previously, was that when it did begin and we started our communication with LIPA, we realized how important that was and we, in the future, hope to enhance that, keep that going. Because as I mentioned, we -- many, many of the situations with the outages, we have to follow them, so it was important they identified to us where they were coming back, we were able to be right behind them and to deal with it that way, so that's one of the things we hope to improve.

Lastly but importantly, we recognize that Cablevision customers were inconvenienced and we want to thank them for their patience while we work to restore service during this time. We also -- I want to take a moment to thank our employees, because our employees were personally affected. We have thousands of Cablevision employees who live right here long on Long Island and they were personally affected in their own homes by these outages, yet they showed up, they came to work, they were there for us acting very professionally and productively. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

All right. Before we start questions, I just wanted to thank Ms. Aziz. You made it very clear that the communication between National Grid and LIPA was very -- right on, and I think Ms. Gilroy just said the same thing. That makes, I think, us feel really good that you guys were communicating effectively and efficiently and really being effective with how you restored service.

The key element now is that, as Joan just said, we need -- I don't know what the communication is to the Executive Branch, but if you are -- if there is somebody calling the Executive Branch, you need to know that the Chair of Public Safety, under the Executive Order, needs to also be included. And then we're going to work in how FRES is also there because they're the ones that actually communicate with all our agencies. So you're doing an excellent communication job and getting the job done, from what I'm hearing. We just need to know how it's going and what, if anything, we can get out to the public or to the other agencies like Public Works or anything like that. Okay.
Legislator Lindsay.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have one question for Verizon; why would you wait four days to declare a state of emergency?

MS. AZIZ:

We declare a state of emergency when we cannot react fast enough to our trouble load. Can you hear me?

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Not really.

MS. AZIZ:

Okay. As I mentioned before, a state of emergency for us, it in no way is speaking to the seriousness with which we take the situation. It merely, in our terms, is a term that we use to invoke the overtime -- to remove the overtime cap.

P.O. LINDSAY:

No, I heard you before. So you were on top of all your outages Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and then Thursday you declared a state of emergency?

MS. AZIZ:

What we were finding with the large amount of commercial power outages is that our workers were going into areas and finding that power was not there, so we cannot restore power -- we cannot restore service in many situations like that. If conditions are not safe in communities, we ask our workers, in the interest of their safety, to leave that alone and return that job to us. What we were finding on Monday was, if I remember correctly, hundreds of jobs were being returned back to us because technicians did not have the access that they needed to restore service. We found more, but as commercial power started to be restored in these communities, then we saw the incoming starting to build.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Okay. I have to leave, and I apologize, I have to go to the Newsday Editorial Board; I didn't plan my schedule very well today. Would the committee please talk to the shelter providers to make sure that they had all the resources they had? I am very interested in that, all right? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Absolutely. Okay, Legislator Browning.

LEG. BROWNING:

Oh, sorry. Yeah, a couple of questions. I know, Joan, you -- with the Optimum on-line and your telephones, if you have a phone that goes down, who's responsible for the phone lines? Because I'm not sure who -- you have -- okay, with Cablevision you have Optimum On-Line, you have, you know, the phone, the cable --

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

The Triple Play.

LEG. BROWNING:

The Triple Play, whatever. And so if your phones go out, who takes care of your phone lines?

MS. GILROY:

We're responsible for our system. But again, it's the --

MS. MAHONEY:

The mic is not on.

MS. GILROY:

Sorry. We're responsible for our system. Yet again, that's all based on the commercial power.

LEG. BROWNING:

Okay. A couple of questions for Verizon. Because, you know, I do have three neighbors who work for Verizon, one recently retired and worked in the Riverhead yard, and he still talks to his co-workers and he's telling me that currently the Riverhead facility has no poles and they're sitting around waiting for poles to come, and also that the Commack yard is going to National Grid to get poles as we speak. I'm being told that you did not properly prepare and get poles, you know, prior

to the hurricane, and I'd like you to respond to that.

Because it's my understanding that -- also, I'd like to know what you have done or what you did do with our FRES, with our Emergency Operation Center. What kind of coordination did you do with them prior to the hurricane to make sure that you were prepared and getting out there to do the job?

MS. AZIZ:

Let me first respond to your issue on the availability of poles. We -- as I mentioned before, we took stock of how many poles we had, what various sizes they were, we shared that communication with our partners in National Grid. We made arrangements to have deliveries of additional poles come in throughout the storm, you know, right after the storm and into the following week.

What we did find, Verizon has placed, since the beginning of the storm, 211 poles as of yesterday. What we have found is that we are going through the inventory and that we have made sure that our suppliers are closely connected with us and know the urgency of getting the poles to us. What we did find a couple of days ago is that in -- we have line -- we have line dispatch centers out of Riverhead and numerous places across Suffolk County. What we did find is that in some locations we were running low and that we had to, in some cases, for example, go to the Commack facility to pick up poles and then head back towards Riverhead; we did find ourselves in that situation a number of times. But we are, at this point, not low on poles enough where we've had to reach out to National Grid to get poles, although we did have some discussion that we would if we needed to; that situation has not arised (sic) as of yet.

In addition, we have back-up plans and have assessed where there are extra poles for us. We had -- in case the deliveries were not made in time, we have access to telephone poles out of our Brooklyn area where they were impacted less by winds and poles and we have our logistics teams just waiting for the go-ahead to transport those poles to us should we need them; the need has not -- we were able to meet our needs internally within Suffolk County.

LEG. BROWNING:

Okay. So then you're telling me that the Commack facility is not going to National Grid as we speak. Because I just received the information this morning, in fact within the past 30 minutes, I just got a message from someone that the Commack yard is going to National Grid right now to get poles.

MS. AZIZ:

Well, if it happened in the last 30 minutes, I couldn't respond to you, I've been here.

LEG. BROWNING:

Okay. There was an article I read, a Mr. Bonomo from -- I guess he's in media relations, and you said it also about the land-lines not being as vital. He made a comment about land-lines not being as vital as they have been in the past. And I know in my office when we lost our phones temporarily, you know, we have constituents calling looking for help, especially during the emergency. I would like to differ with him because land-lines are extremely important. Yeah, we use our cell phones, however, if a cell tower goes down and we lose signal, and I know in my home we don't always have a good signal at home. So my husband's required, through the New York City Police Department, to have a land-line, and while they told him he's not going to be flying, he's a helicopter pilot so he wasn't going to be flying that night, but they told him to be on stand-by. Now, if he lost his cell phone he needed the land-line, and they are required, it's mandatory for them, also with the fire department employees, NYPD, FDNY, they are required to have a land-line, it's mandatory to have that, and especially if they're on-call or being told to be on stand-by. And again, our hospitals and many facilities use land-lines, and I'm sure Suffolk County PD require the same; I don't know if anybody is here, if you could just yes or no? Is Suffolk County PD required to have a land-line still?

CHIEF WHITE:

Not a land-line, Legislator, but they have to have current contact information, regardless of cell or land-line.

LEG. BROWNING:

Current contact, okay. So land-lines are very important. And I know my 94 year-old neighbor across the street doesn't have a cell phone; I don't think she'd know how to use it. So we do have a lot of senior citizens who still don't have cell phones. So, you know, the comment in this article is to assume that everybody's got a cell phone is incorrect. So I think moving forward, making sure that you're aware that we do -- land-lines are vital and many people still use them and still need them. So I don't like to hear that, "Well, you know, they'll probably use a cell phone," but what if a cell tower goes down and you can't use your cell phone either, or you're in an area where there's a bad signal?

MS. AZIZ:

I can't speak to Mr. Bonomo's comments because I'm not quite sure I'm clear on what you're referring to. However, my comment was regarding the fact that customers had communication and that they were less concerned with their calling in their phone line trouble than they would be regarding their commercial power. I was not in any way trying to say that land-lines are not important. I'm in the business of restoring land-lines every day. We took a lot of precautions to make sure Police Departments and hospitals did have the land-lines that they needed. In fact, we -- Paul Dunn, who's another peer of mine, was working closely with the various municipalities and it is through him we did get escalations for -- just a couple that come to mind would be the Marine Base in Babylon and others and we restored those as quickly -- made those a priority and got to those as quickly as we possibly could, even with generators where there was no commercial power.

LEG. BROWNING:

Okay. And I guess this would go maybe for cable, and I know that the phone issue, but did you meet and have prior meetings and, during the hurricane, have continuous meetings and coordination, communication with our FRES Department, Fire, Rescue & Emergency Services?

MS. AZIZ:

I did not personally myself, but Paul Dunn from Verizon was responsible for those communications and I took direction from him and communication from him as to what agencies required help.

LEG. BROWNING:

Okay. And I'll talk with FRES about that and see how that went.

MS. AZIZ:

You know, as we look to see what we can do better going forward, that we will certainly make sure, as my partners here have said, to make sure that we keep the Executive Offices in close communication with our efforts.

LEG. BROWNING:

Okay. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator Anker.

LEG. BROWNING:

Oh, hold on, Joan wanted to say something.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Oh, I'm sorry. Go ahead.

MS. GILROY:

Okay. Legislator Browning, I'm not aware that we did, but I think one of the things we take away from today is we would surely be happy to have that contact information and working with you and continue, if we need, in the future.

LEG. BROWNING:

Okay, thank you.

LEG. ANKER:

That was my question also. I wanted to find out for sure if you had direct contact. I know LIPA did, I saw your stations set up, but did Cablevision and Verizon have direct communication with our Emergency Center for the County?

MS. GILROY:

I don't know. I believe we did pass along sporadically some information, but as I said, taking away today that we will make sure that we do that in the future.

LEG. ANKER:

Okay, maybe we should talk to Joe Williams and have a special computer set up. Again, I'm serious, I think that's how important it was. I think my cable was out probably a little -- about a week, about a week, I lost electricity about a day. But again, I think, again, coordinating is so important.

And the other question I have with Verizon and Cablevision, do you have a tracking system that shows you on a computer screen what lines are down and what lines are not?

MS. AZIZ:

I'm sorry, I need clarification on your question.

LEG. ANKER:

In other words, LIPA, they have to send linemen out to check to see if the power lines are down. Does Verizon have a computer tracking system to determine what lines are working, what lines are not working?

MS. AZIZ:

I would say that for many individual customers, just as the case is with National Grid, that we do require the customers to call us. That said, we can track through our various electronics areas that are down, so we would know when a central office is down what customers would be impacted out of there. We would know out of our controlled environment vaults what DSL customers, what T-1 customers, what businesses were being impacted out of those critical network elements.

LEG. ANKER:

Because, again, what happens is when there's no power and there's no telephones available, you can't get the information needed. You know, so it falls back to not -- the communication, the communication needs to be improved. And again, my thought, immediate thought, like you had said, Joan, is possibly have an emergency satellite situation available.

MS. GILROY:

We definitely have a tracking system that can tell us what nodes are out, that we could detect. So, therefore, we will know if there's an outage. A node feeds approximately 500 homes, so we can tell at that level.

Then there's a system that we do have, a technical system that we call a health check, and we can go in and see if a particular home is down because of the outage or -- say we know it was restored. Say we know LIPA restored, we may have known there was a problem with a node and we corrected

that and a customer calls and says, "But I'm still out," we can do what we call a health check and we can find out whether their modems are working or whether their boxes are working. So that we then could go in and then we know we have to set up a service call to see that particular home.

LEG. ANKER:

Is it something maybe LIPA or National Grid might be able to -- you can work with them to share technology? I guess that's for you, Joan.

MR. BRUCKNER:

Well, yeah.

LEG. ANKER:

Is that something that's maybe LIPA or National Grid might be able to use that technology?

MS. GILROY:

That I can't comment, I don't know. We'd have to find out.

MR. BRUCKNER:

Legislator, if I could respond to that, that technology issue. So we talked about having people in the substations to identify the damage when it's extreme damage such as a hurricane. That's why we need feet on the ground, to identify where wires are down.

Let me just speak to what we would know on a day like today. So if we had a -- you know, I think the term was used a "node" before, which would be equivalent to our substation. If our substation breaker has tripped or has opened up because of damage in the field, we would know all 2,000 customers that were affected by that. During a storm like this, when there's multiple damage locations, we don't know why that substation breaker tripped. What was the damage, cause and location. So that's why we would need feet on the ground, because for a substation that serves 2,000 customers or a substation breaker that serves 2,000 customers, there could be 10, 20, 30 different damage locations that would have caused that, and it's to find those 30 locations which is why we need feet on the ground. But on a normal day, if customers go out and they call up, we can identify without sending people out in the field what was the cause for that outage and send out a repair crew.

LEG. ANKER:

Okay. And again, I think one of the most important things that we need to realize is we can't always get our feet on the ground. We've got electrical wires and the trees have fallen, the roads are closed; again, technology is so important, especially with this emergency situation. So thank you.

MR. BRUCKNER:

Absolutely.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. Legislator Kennedy. Now, just to upgrade us, we're going on two hours, we have an hour for the next fourteen groups of people, so.

LEG. KENNEDY:

I'll make it real quick, Mr. Chair. This is simple informational requests, and again, towards an eye -- particularly, I'm going to go to LIPA first and then to Verizon.

Before I spoke about a number of different things that I was going to ask for as far as the decision tree or the dynamics when it came to restoration. The other item that I'm going to ask you to speak a little bit to -- not now, but in the future -- is the decision component for residential restoration as opposed to commercial. And again, I'm just going to leave it at I had occasion to have to make

some contact, as you know, for a couple of commercial entities that went on a number of days with significant workforces and inability to operate whatsoever. So I want to know a little bit more about that dynamic when you're looking at bringing up a particular area, assessing the damage and making the decisions and particularly committing the resources. Cognizant of the fact that businesses may very well be talking about, you know, 20, 30, 50, a hundred employees who can't get a day in because there's no juice in the plant and the impact that you have on the commercial side. I don't want to minimize in any way, shape or form the hardship that residents sustain when it comes to getting restoration in, but, you know, the decision process that goes on with the commitment or the resources and how you balance addressing the needs.

And then the other question is a much broader question and it goes to -- I don't know if it's relevant or not, poles. Poles are split as far as ownership goes, I believe, between Verizon and between Grid or LIPA. If a Verizon pole goes, if it breaks, if it suffers, I guess, whatever you want to call it, catastrophic, you know, failure and you lose all utilities on that pole, maybe it's carrying, you know, high voltage or even just individual distribution, how does the decision process go forward for restoration? Does it make any difference whether it's a Verizon pole or a LIPA pole?

MR. BRUCKNER:

I'll answer that question. The pole ownership is somewhat split almost 50/50; not quite, but there is a parity agreement. And on a typical day, a sunny day, a pole that fails, it is the responsibility of the pole owner to change it, okay, on a normal day.

For a storm such as what we just had, or even in storms of lesser magnitude, we always put that agreement aside and we put out the -- you know, we're indifferent as to who owns it. So on a Hurricane Irene, any pole that was damaged, we coordinate with Verizon, we put our work force out there, their work force. Typically what we'll do is we'll -- you know, we stage a significant amount of poles across the Island, and in the case of Hurricane Irene, not only do we have our multiple yards that we have across the Island, we set up staging areas out in East Hampton Airport, Brookhaven Airport, Bethpage State Park, and what we did was we just put a significant amount of poles out there, far in excess of what we thought we would need. We would use our resources and the gas organization to just material handle us and bring those poles out to those locations, and whoever had a line crew available first -- and that's where the coordination was between Verizon and National Grid, whoever had a line crew available first would replace that pole. Replacing the pole meant they would set the pole and transfer over their facilities. The other party still needed to get out there to transfer over the facilities that they're responsible for, and that's really more from a personal safety perspective. The Verizon personnel are not qualified to handle the voltage lines and, you know, we're not capable -- I guess we're capable, but we're not handling the communication wires.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Part of the out-of-state crews that you brought in, there was one in particular from Michigan that worked a lot in the Ronkonkoma and Nesconset area, and they had heavy equipment. I mean, those were, you know, three and four-axle vehicles with the hoist and everything else, and they were able to go ahead and get in there into tough areas. And especially the easements, as you know, which are literally the worst for anybody to have to work in and the hardest to service.

But this is a question across the board for the both of you. Poles age and, you know, they have a finite life. And there's a normal replacement protocol for a dry-rotted pole; there's nothing worse for linemen than to be on a dry-rotted pole. Do both of you replace poles at the same process? I mean, is it like periodic maintenance where, you know, 15-years old and you automatically replace a pole?

MR. BRUCKNER:

So I couldn't speak to the Verizon process, but for the LIPA process there is a pole inspection program that takes place. We do inspect the poles. You know, typically a pole, when you buy it, its

typical life, depending on the pole, is around 40 years, more so.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay.

MR. BRUCKNER:

And we do inspect those poles and, you know, we'll inspect them by visual treatment, we'll do a mechanical test where we'll engage gauge the pole to see what type of -- you know, as you had indicated -- dry-rot or shell-rot there is, and we also treat the poles. That -- you know, what I would like to do is get back to this committee on what that protocol is, how many are tested and what that maintenance frequency is.

I will say that, you know, LIPA -- and I talked about their investment in the infrastructure on Long Island several times already today, but their investment into the pole base over the last 13, 14 years has been extremely significant, but that's details I'll get back to this committee on, and where we can go forward with that.

LEG. KENNEDY:

That would be fine. And I would be interested in Verizon's process and I'm hoping that it's equivalent.

MR. GEORGE:

Yeah. So we basically take the lead from LIPA, when they do their upgrades, usually it's -- you know, about 43% of the poles are ours and the rest are LIPA's. So when the upgrades take place, they contact us, they send us the information and we replace our poles, whether it's defective or not, at the same time. So usually it's in line with the transmission upgrade that LIPA does on a routine basis.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay. But on a regular neighborhood -- and again, I'll go to the worst case scenario, backyard easement. If LIPA's inspecting on whatever their periodic inspection program is, are you doing the same with LIPA poles? I'm sorry, with Verizon poles.

MR. GEORGE:

Yeah. So basically, right now I'll have to get back to you. Typically we don't go into a backyard to look at the pole, if that's what, you know, LIPA does; I'm not familiar with that. But typically that's not something we've done.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Again, going forward, that's some of the stuff that I'd like to look at just so that we have, you know, an idea going forward for the status of the system. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. You're off the hot seat.

*(*Laughter*)*

Thank you very much. You know, again, I think what's become clear is that you -- at least to me anyway, I don't know for anybody else -- these three organizations are communicating with -- amongst each other in a very admirable and effective way. We need just for us to do it. And I'm not asking you to reach out to 18 Legislators. The Chair of Public Safety has been given the responsibility, as I see it, through the Executive Order. I will take that on for the next three months and make sure that everybody here is kept up in the loop. And I'm going to try to work it out with you how we can keep FRES in the loop, too, because they really administer for the County Executive

and the Legislature, so we'll work on that together. But I appreciate your information and I feel confident that if we have another event in the next season, this season, you'll be ready to help us out. Thank you very much.

Okay, while the seat is still warm, I'd like to ask the school district representatives to come forward, and also the Red Cross and the Suffolk County SPCA.

All right. Thank you very much for responding to our request. All right, so I appreciate you coming and just -- to just go over it real quick, you heard all that testimony and questioning. Again, we know to a degree what you guys did, you came forward, you were willing to help us out. What do you feel was effective, what do you think could be improved on the performance? And again, that doesn't imply that you didn't do an outstanding performance, but what have you now quickly said, "You know what we should do? We should do this." And who needs -- who do we need to communicate to help you implement that strategy that you may have come up with? If you could just introduce yourselves and then -- I don't care. I guess the school districts first and then the Red Cross and the SPCA. Okay. Thank you. Allan, do you want to start us off?

MR. GERSTENLAUER:

As you know --

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

You know what, Allan? You've got to press that button.

MR. GERSTENLAUER:

Okay. Allan Gerstenlauer, Superintendent of the Longwood Central School District.

MR. CLEMENSEN:

Lars Clemensen, Superintendent, Hampton Bays Union-Free School District.

MS. LAUBER:

Gerry Lauber, Director, Suffolk County SPCA.

MS. DEMYEN:

Eva Demyen, Superintendent, Deer Park School District.

MS. BARKER:

Elizabeth Barker, Director of Emergency Services for the Red Cross.

MR. MILLER:

John Miller, Chief Executive Officer, Long Island Red Cross.

MR. GERSTENLAUER:

We -- as you know, Longwood High School served as a Red Cross Sheltering site for the weekend. We had -- I've been telling our community, we had 400 weekend guests that began showing up some time Friday evening and finally the last of our guests left at about five o'clock on Monday afternoon. And I will tell you that it was an enormously successful experience for the people who needed to be sheltered as well as the people running the shelter. So my comments today are not, as you mentioned, Mr. Eddington, not to criticize, not to point fingers. We want to smooth out the bumps. And I appreciate this opportunity, because in our school district we -- when there's a crisis, we meet afterwards and we try to figure out what went right, what went wrong, how do we improve it for the next time. And there are some of the things that we do that I think will suggest some improvements for us as we go forward.

Some very, very, very good things happened over that weekend. Some of it happened by accident, and that's the things that I'd like to address. And I think my overarching observation, if you will, about the weekend was that we, meaning the school district, misunderstood what our role would be and the dynamics among the organizations, among in-between the organizations when we were serving as a sheltering site. Our assumption, and it was incorrect, was that we would turn the keys over, Red Cross would have it, and that turned out not to be the role that we played. We thinking we'd have maybe a third string role, a nominal role if our assistance was needed. The reality was that we were much more actively involved than we anticipated and we had a couple of our managers, our systems managers, facilities and Director of School Safety who stayed throughout the weekend, and thank goodness that they did because we were able to work with the Red Cross, the people at the site and make it a good experience for the people who were sheltered there.

There are probably four issues, one a minor one but I want to mention it anyway, four issues that our concerns revolved around; one being a manpower issue, the second being a food service issue; the third and probably the minor one, but could be major, being a security issue; and the fourth a coordinated preparedness program that we're concerned about. First on the manpower concerns. I would give broad kudos to the mental health people who showed up through the Red Cross. We have -- I had a number of reports that they were there throughout the weekend, they did an outstanding job in assisting some of the people who were there and, quite frankly, under an enormous amount of stress. So kudos to them. We -- the school district was able to call in a team of our security people, we were not anticipating 400 guests and when we realized that they were materializing, we needed to call in additional security to manage the site and to provide some measure of supervision.

We also called in a number of our custodial workers to -- and maintenance people to handle everything from cleaning bathrooms through monitoring -- once our systems, our power went down, to monitoring our generators to make sure that they were running effectively.

Going forward, we would look to probably bring in some of our food service workers, something as simple as turning on the ovens, they are not your mom's 30" stovetop units. We run commercial ovens and people didn't know how to operate them, so we needed to bring our own people in to do that. Some of the folks were looking at -- the volunteers were looking for, you know, to boil soup and do some -- we don't have stovetop units. We don't use pots and pans in schools, it's either microwaves or ovens and that's, you know, a lesson learned for all of us.

The Red Cross, the shelter manager happens to be one of our employees who is very, very familiar with our building, so that was a plus for the Red Cross and also for us because she knew her way around. She shared some concerns that -- and she called the mass care volunteers, and I don't know exactly what that means, but I'm gathering that it was folks -- she needed more assistance with registration, with food service and what she called door managers, to simply be there, the volunteers to be there, and we had people in our community go in and fill that.

The food service was another issue that I first learned about on Sunday morning. I was unable to get to the site; I live on Shelter Island, got stranded there for the weekend. But the supply of food from the Red Cross apparently was fairly limited and we also raised, in our post debriefing raised some concerns about what would happen if the Red Cross were trying to deliver food in extreme conditions with road closures and things of that nature. We were fortunate enough to have had a conversation with our food service manager just a matter of days to weeks prior to this incident and he suggested that our USDA food supply may be used in this type of an emergency. So we have freezers stocked with pre-cooked pizzas, pre-cooked chicken, for lack of a better word, chicken mc nuggets, it's a little more glorified than that. So when they -- when the Red Cross manager called me on Sunday morning, she said, "We have breakfast, but we're going to be in trouble once breakfast is done." Said we reached out to our food service manager and made our USDA products available to the site and the Federal Government will take care of that for us, so that was not an

expense for the district. But, again, our kitchens were not up and fully running and there were some issues in terms of how we turned the stoves on and things of that nature, so we're going to work on that.

There were just some minor security issues that we will work on internally and with the Red Cross. Of the 400 people our folks said we had, 395 of them were very, very, very appreciative, but when you get that many folks together, they called them characters. We had, you know, a half of dozen characters that were there, and there were some minor things. The Red Cross volunteers being isolated in certain parts of the building, you know, just for security purposes, not a good plan, so we're going to go over that with our folks. They had -- and some of the sillier issues. You know, our schools are non-smoking zones. Well, I told our guys to please call that off for the weekend because you can't have 400 people in a site. We don't have designated smoking areas. You don't want to send people out in 60 to 70 mile an hour winds to have a smoke, but they can't smoke in the building either, so that turned into an issue for us, but we'll work on that -- we'll work on that as well.

I think the most important piece, though, that we took away from it is working with the County, working with the Red Cross on a coordinated preparedness plan that not if this occurs, it's when it occurs, and it could occur in -- I mean, the last time we served as a shelter was 15 years ago and it might not occur for another 15 years, but we need to kind of figure it could occur in another 15 minutes and we want to be ready for it. So we will be setting up a SWAT team, if you will, a district crisis response team that will be trained in the {NIMS} protocol, that's kind of the common language that emergency responders use; we will have a team prepared in that regard.

We will be scheduling annual walk-through and drills with the Red Cross. One of the things I learned just yesterday, actually, in our debriefing meeting is that we had a meeting with the Red Cross and some practice things, but that was years ago and it hasn't been resent. And in our system, we practice even the simplest exercises on a periodic basis. So to have a walk-through a couple of years ago simply is inadequate, so we'll be scheduling that with our folks at the Red Cross.

And the other piece, I think the piece that the County could help us with, is coordinating I guess interagency coordination. We at Longwood are used to managing big, big events. We have -- our system is about ninety-five hundred students, so any event that we run, from a Valentine's Day dance to graduation, are big events and we're used to managing that. And for better or worse, we have a lot of practice managing crises. And I think that the Red Cross and the County need to leverage that experience so that when an incident like this occurs, we very, very clearly know here is what Longwood can offer and what we can anticipate from them, and Longwood hears what we expect from you in terms of a response. Because we pulled it together, but it was a little bit by seat-of-the-pants, and when you're sitting on Shelter Island on the phone, seat-of-the-pants doesn't work, I need to have a much better operational plan in place.

But overall, it went very, very well. Kudos to the Red Cross manager and to the Longwood employees who kind of left their families and, quite frankly. Set up cots on Friday night and didn't leave until about midnight on Monday night. So, but I do appreciate this opportunity to share those thoughts with you.

MR. CLEMENSEN:

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the invitation to participate. I submitted several folders to the Clerk this morning to give you an outline of the chronology from Friday -- really Thursday through Monday and how the shelter -- how our operations and events transpired for us in Hampton Bays. Hampton Bays served as the primary central shelter for the Town of Southampton. We served about 300 residents who arrived early Saturday, but did leave much earlier than they did in Longwood Sunday evening. And my comments are absolutely in line with Dr. Gerstenlauer, that our shelter, I believe, was a success, residents were safe, they were comfortable, they were taken care of. And moving

forward, our opportunity to do this better lies in what we can do in terms of better understanding the relationship between a facility and the Red Cross and our agreement to be a sheltering facility and the coordination of roles. We found ourselves reacting, and as a school district, we're prepared to do that every single day. But throughout the weekend, we found ourselves reacting and responding to the same issues that Longwood faced; manpower, custodial, security and operations.

I live ins Hampton Bays, so I moved my wife with me to the shelter and used my own office and the school as a base, but we were in a reacting position. I think moving forward, better understanding of the responsibilities of what's expected of us will put us in a ready position for the next time. I went to our business office last night to pull the Red Cross contract and read it much more carefully, and there I saw from 2008 the designation of roles, facility coordinator, food services manager, custodial manager, security liaison, roles that we developed on-site in real time as they were needed and instituted them with district staff, but things that were set up in protocol many years ago. And so I look forward to working with our -- or Southampton Town, the County, and also the Red Cross to better understand those roles and what's required of us.

The school district is absolutely willing to do this again and step up for the community. It is definitely a community center. We ran into some of those infrastructural issues which we need to work out, our generator only powered our auditorium, and it was through construction lighting and Christmas lights that we strung through the hallways to get safe passage to the gymnasium where the County and Commissioner Williams is to be thanked for this as well, the County brought out a generator on Sunday mid-storm so that we could power lighting in the sleeping quarters in the gymnasium.

And some of the more logistical, silly things that happened when we opened up for lunch on Sunday, they were microwavable meals. And with no power, we can have four microwaves set up to the generator, four minutes a meal. I was an English teacher, but I know the math is overwhelming in how many hours that would be to feed 300 people. What I would like to say is kudos to the Hampton Bays community, King Kullen and our local bakery stepped up and said, "Come down to the stores and we'll turn out all the ready-to-eat food and baked goods for you," so we were able to react on the fly to that.

So I would say the shelter was a success and that people were safe, people were taken care of. And in the spirit of continuous improvement, we're looking forward to being in the ready position next time something like this happens. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you very much.

MS. DEMYEN:

Hi. Thank you for the invitation also. I had a slightly different experience in our district in that having been the first district on Long Island to experience Swine Flu, we -- I always learn to expect the unexpected. So when we knew that Deer Park would be used as a facility to shelter -- although we did not have as many because we're not as large as a district, say, for example, as Longwood, we had under 100 people at our shelter, but I met with -- long before the weekend, I met with my buildings and grounds staff, my chief custodian of the school and made sure that they were available with their assistance for any assistance that the Red Cross needed during that time.

We also knew that we would probably be out of power, so we did have a generator at our school and extra lines and whatever, and I really have to be thankful for my buildings and grounds staff that were very well prepared to deal with the Red Cross. So we really didn't have much difficulty in coordinating efforts with the Red Cross. We had a very extremely positive experience.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. Just to comment on what I'm hearing now for the school districts. I think at least the bigger areas, the four issues of personnel, food, security and equipment. And so that leads me to believe that, yes, you're right, school districts deal with crises all the time, but that somehow the plan has to be developed between the Red Cross and the schools and that it has to be some meetings going on, going over who is responsible. Because there are roles that you see that are to be filled and we need to know who's expected to fill them. If it's school district personnel, my next question would be who's paying those people and how that all happens and, you know, are they off or are they on vacation? If it's Red Cross, which is what my assumption was, probably inaccurately, how do they coordinate with the school districts? So that I see right away there's a communication gap there. Not in ability; you guys met the needs of our community which I applaud you of, but how to make sure that there's no, "Oh, my God. What are we going to do," and then run more proactive, not reactive. And that's what obviously I think the Red Cross is going to have to take the lead with that. I'd like to hear from the Suffolk SPCA.

MR. LAUBER:

Thank you. It's not sitting with my fellow Superintendents; as you know, I retired 12 years ago, but I feel right at home.

I want to focus on five things quickly. One, planning, communication, execution, adjustment and reflections. From a planning point of view, we've been coordinating four years with FRES in terms of setting up an emergency facility, a pet-friendly shelter, if you will, in Yaphank. We learned a lot of lessons from Katrina, that many people died because they did not want to leave their pets at home because they could not be accommodated in shelters specifically designated for humans. The planning was excellent. We focused on one facility where both pets and their owners could stay. We focused on getting support from CERT volunteers that actively participated in the last drill that we had. Our -- one of our officers spent 36-hours straight at the FRES facility in Yaphank coordinating activities between FRES and the Suffolk County SPCA without relief, and that's the tired guy sitting back there in uniform, Tom Cappetta, he did a great job.

Communications were great. We were able to talk to each other and we had -- even though there may have been some problems with a phone, we had access to our Police ban that we were able to communicate with our personnel that were involved.

The execution did not go well; it did not go well because everything that we had planned for never happened. We had planned to be in one shelter where we had concentration of our personnel. As you know, many of our volunteers work with Fire Rescue, fire departments, EMS, and they had to prioritize their line-up for responding and we were left with a handful of people, mostly supervisors, who were at the shelters, some of whom spent 12, 24, and 36-hours of continuous service at those shelters. We were assigned to two shelters, one in Brentwood, and kudos to the Town of Islip, they did a great job in getting the recreation center set up. We did have a generator that was delivered by the town, but it was never really connected, but it was there.

The shelter in Riverhead had no generator, it was a small facility, could not accommodate the number of people. People had to be turned away. And the big flaw that we found was that people were separated from their pets by a distance of more than two city blocks. Now, the requirement was that when people came and brought their pets, we would take pictures of them, put tags on them so that we'd positive identification, and it was their responsibility to come and walk the pets and to feed them. How could these people be expected to walk two city blocks to come and feed and walk their pets during the height of a storm? So that was bad planning on somebody's part, and we're not sure how it happened, but that's why we thought the facility in Yaphank would have been perfect because it was for both people and could accommodate 250 pets. So we made adjustments, and we were able to get people to be there. We got the support that we need. We had no food, no place to sleep. Now that I know that Longwood has food, we're going to be sending

people over to Longwood for pizza and nuggets, but we had nothing. We had to pay for food, Chief Gross and I out of our own pockets, for our personnel who were serving at the center.

From a reflective point of view, we don't have a contract anymore with FRES; that contract expired on the 31st of May. But to be good citizens and responsible to the residents of the County, we went and delivered those services even though we didn't have a contract. We're willing to sit down with FRES to talk about a contract and what needs to be done and the kind of support that we need to have, because we did not have the CERT personnel that were supposed to be there. The shelters fell completely on the SPCA alone without any other support from any County agency, and at our own expense without any reimbursement from the County. So we're more than willing to share the knowledge that we have, the skills, provide the transition, but we cannot deliver services and run those shelters unless we have a better coordinated plan with the County and unless we make some progress on indemnification for our personnel which currently we do not have. Thanks.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. So you've identified some situations that need to be worked on. And we're going to find out, you know, who designates -- I think it's FRES, Joe will be coming up -- and we'll figure out, or at least he will figure out how to communicate more effectively and efficiently with your organization. Because it seems like you really had been on top of everything and then when the crisis -- and we get into that crisis mode, we kind of all -- things were altered without considering the people that have to do it; that happens a lot in organizations. But we will try to work on that. The Red Cross.

MR. MILLER:

Certainly. Thank you. Thank you for the opportunity to testify here today. It's great to be with our colleagues here, who obviously we have some communication to work on with them and we look forward to joining and continuing our partnership with them. I just want to very briefly give you an overview of the Red Cross' operation as it related to Hurricane Irene, and just a little, you know, geography and logistics of how the operation was set up.

The Long Island Chapter, the newly formed chapter in Nassau and Suffolk, consolidated as of July 1st, earlier this year, and we're part of what we call the Greater New York Region, which also includes New York City, Metro New York, Lower Hudson Valley, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Westchester and actually Greenwich, Connecticut. The New York Region began preparedness on August 24th in anticipation of the hurricane's arrival. This included coordination with our response partners with the Nassau and Suffolk County offices of Emergency Management, the State Office of Emergency Management as well as FEMA. We had Red Cross personnel stationed full-time in the command centers at each of those locations.

At the same time, our headquarters, based out of Washington, D.C., determined that because of the anticipated size of the operation, we needed material resources and additional personnel immediately. And the National Headquarters designated the preparedness and response operation a Statewide operation to provide the full support of the American Red Cross to local chapters expected to be impacted, particularly here on Long Island. This meant additional supplies from personnel, not only from New York State but around the nation. The Statewide response command was set up in the headquarters of our New York City chapter in Manhattan, it was staffed by experienced and trained American Red Cross personnel from not only Long Island but New York State as well as colleagues from across the country.

Our media department began a concentrated outreach to Long Island to inform residents of what they should do to prepare for the storm stressing three key points; have a plan, have the proper supplies and stay informed. Information was provided through various social media networks, local print, radio and television media and on our website. Subject matter, experts from the chapter were also made available for interviews to help spread the word on preparedness.

Across Long Island, we opened 31 shelters, housed approximately forty-four hundred individuals impacted by the storm. Across Long Island, coastal storm supplies including cots, blankets, medical supplies and non-perishable food and water have been stock-piled in advance of such an event like Irene due to some State funding that the organization received back in 2005. We coordinated this effort with both the Nassau and Suffolk County Offices of Emergency Management. These supplies -- we had those supplies as well as supplies given to us from our greater New York region and the national office.

Once it was declared safe to resume outdoor operations, the American Red Cross personnel began conducting damage assessment in coordination with our County partners. Communities were assessed to determine immediate need such as food, water and/or clean-up kits. Bulk supplies of these items were distributed by the American Red Cross and our volunteers and personnel.

As of today, the American Red Cross has assisted Long Island residents with over 17,000 meals, 114,000 snacks, over 400 flood clean-up kits and more than 550 items to assist with items such as shovels, rakes, tarps and gloves to clean-up, you know, debris and those impacted by flooding.

In closing, I would like to thank our partners in government, you know, Commissioner Williams, OEM, all of our school districts that are here today and those who are not. We look forward to, you know, perfecting our processes as we go forward, working with the school districts and all of our partners to enhance communication and be ready for the next event.

LEG. GREGORY:

Question.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. Yeah, just a comment before I open it up to questions. I heard a lot of what you've told others to do and to be prepared. However, it doesn't seem like you really told us what you could do. You know, I heard about supplies, supplies, supplies, but when I heard here the list from the school districts, I mean, it seems like the only thing that was supplied really adequately -- personnel, security, equipment, no -- was food, and in reality those were microwave, so there wasn't a lot of thought that went into that. So there seems to be a total system -- systemic breakdown, not with what your -- the information you're getting out to what others can do. I mean, it's pretty good to be able to tell others what they can do to make it better for themselves. But when it came to you guys delivering the services, when I talked to some of the school personnel, they were under the impression that you guys would show up like a crisis team, hand you keys and then they would go back to take care of their own personal responsibilities, but that's not at all what happened. And that's a concern that I have, because they -- these school districts stepped up to the plate, but what if they didn't?

MS. BARKER:

I'd like to address some of those questions. The first regarding the food issue, we did have supplies and meals ready to eat and water preposition at the schools. There was a breakdown with our food vendor; when we asked for cold items we meant sandwiches and they brought frozen foods, and at that point we just had to make the best of that situation, as we did. There was overwhelming, positive support from the communities and the volunteers who were working in the shelters, you know, they -- it was overwhelming, positive support and overwhelming support from the school districts. But we did have meals ready to eat at the location and also in a warehouse in Yaphank to be able to get them back to the shelters that they needed to be.

There's more -- there's after-action items on this, especially internal training for our shelter managers, about what -- about a better way to distribute food during an emergency. Because when we did actually send people out in the height of the storm to say, "Okay, this is -- we heard you, we're bringing you extra food," they got there and found, yes, you did have stuff that you could

have -- that could have made this through. So that's definitely an internal training issue we need to do with our shelter managers.

I definitely have this on my list now, is to meet with our school districts. We're actually -- we've been working closely with the County FRES and with the MRC and that partnership worked out really beautifully during this storm, during this response. And actually, it was the first -- we haven't even been able to co-train our people, we just introduced this new model to them so that they were all able to work together, it was really well. And the next step of this that we were talking about with an adopt-a-shelter program, which will address a lot of these needs, something that came out of this was that we definitely need to continue building our volunteer capacity. Because there's -- you know, it's summer time, people are on vacation, we were pulling people out of the woodwork. So yes, building capacity is number one on this list. But that we were out there, we did have food and there was some confusion among internally what exactly constituted, "Well, if this is a breakfast sandwich, can I still serve it for lunch"; it was that kind of communication.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

The next meeting of the Public Safety Committee is October 6th. What I would like to have, either personally or in writing or in some way communicated to me and the committee, is that you have looked at the identified problem. You said you're going to and we want to be assured that you're working on it. It's not like, okay, we'll have another hurricane October 7th and you're still going to look at it. Let us know that we are better prepared in two weeks than we are now. Because not only will that reassure us, but the people you've got sitting here that has to do it will be better prepared that they then can be a response but not have to do it all. All right, questions. Legislator Browning?

LEG. BROWNING:

Sure. Well, first of all, I'd like to say thank you to all of you for what you do do. Because I know the schools, you never know if your school is going to be an evacuation shelter until almost the last minute; everything is event driven depending on what the emergency is.

There were a couple of issues that I wanted to ask about and one was I worked with FRES some time ago on legislation, on sex offenders not being allowed to go to general population shelters. The gas leak in Mastic caused an evacuation of residents to the William Floyd High School, and there was supposed to be a notice posted notifying, if you're a sex offender, you must identify yourself. And I was just curious, because it wasn't done at the last evacuation, and I know Probation was there, they checked everybody to make sure -- you know, through the Sex Offender Registry, to make sure that there was no sex offenders there, and that was a much smaller group. You're talking Longwood had 400, Hampton Bays 300, Deer Park had 100, and I know that Eastport-South Manor and many other school districts. So I want to know was the notice posted and was that adhered to? Because I hate it when laws are being introduced and they're not being enforced.

MS. BARKER:

I'll answer that. The shelters that we chose for this -- that we chose for this operation were shelters that had our pre-position supplies in them; in those supply boxes are the sex offender signs, so that was included with the signage that should have been posted at registration. I also know that I had received personally calls from Suffolk County Probation and instructed my shelter managers to work with them, you know, as best they could, much like we did in Mastic shelter, to make sure everybody had the information they needed without necessarily compromising client confidentiality.

MR. GERSTENLAUER:

And I can attest to that as well, Ms. Browning, that we did have -- our registration team was screening for sex offenders; can't turn them away, but at least we need to be able to identify them. And to an issue that was just mentioned, we have two -- they call them {Conex} boxes, and I have no idea what that means, but I do know that they're enormous storage boxes behind our high school

with cots and the signs and all the equipment that they might need. I did learn that there wasn't food stored in there, but that's for probably very, very, very good reason. So we had a lot of equipment, I think there were a thousand cots, so we had that type of equipment, and they did try as best they could to screen for the sex offenders. But that's the security thing that I spoke of a little bit earlier, you get people in a large group like that and you really need to monitor everyone carefully, because one of the questions that I had of our team was were the folks who were our guests, were they residents? And for the most part they were not, and understandably because they came from the low-lying areas and we happen not to be a low-lying area. But having said that, the people who are in the shelter are not people who our security folks know. You know, our security folks --

LEG. BROWNING:

Right.

MR. GERSTENLAUER:

-- are trained to deal with, in this case, high school students. They know the families, they know who's coming in, but in this situation we had people from outside our community that makes their job a little bit more difficult. So those are the things that we're going to address internally and with the Red Cross when we get people who show up that we really don't know.

LEG. BROWNING:

Yeah. And FRES did have the plan that they would have a specific shelter for the offenders if, in fact, they do show up, so we'll follow-up with them.

MR. CLEMENSEN:

We had the sign posted in the school from the mass care kit that was on our premises, but to go back to my remarks earlier, the coordination. Our school district keeps in each main office an updated Megan's Law list in a binder by zip code of Hampton Bays and the adjacent zip codes; a perfect opportunity, in hindsight now, to have those binders over at the check-in table as well, it's each profile of the registered offender in the local area. And while the Red Cross volunteer may not have known who that person might be checking in, our in-house district security folks did. So the sign was posted, but another opportunity for what coordination can do for us.

LEG. BROWNING:

And I think our Special Victims Unit, I think they showed up during the gas leak, so I'm hoping that they played a role in this, too.

Another issue was, Allan, I know Longwood is in my district and I spoke with the Yaphank Fire Department and they had said to me that there was an issue that occurred, I guess some people got a little out of control, and there were Police Officers there but somebody called the 7th Precinct to show up; are you familiar with that issue?

MR. GERSTENLAUER:

I'm not familiar with that specific issue. I know that there was a presence from the Suffolk County Police. I'm understanding if they were not officers of the 7th Precinct, they were more broadly representative of all the precincts and headquarters, and there's a name for their unit and I apologize for not knowing what that is, but they were there throughout the weekend and our security folks were there throughout the weekend. I wasn't aware that the 7th Precinct was called to respond in to anything, though.

LEG. BROWNING:

Okay. And one last thing, I guess for the Red Cross. Special needs. We never once heard over the news media that if there was people with special medical needs, that they should be going to the John J. Foley Nursing Home. You know, we have these JEEP applications that get filled out and they

get sent in. I had some constituents who did call wanting to know where they should go, one was actually being sent out to either Riverhead or Hampton Bays. He needed electricity and that wouldn't have been a very good thing for him to show up at Hampton Bays and you didn't have electricity; he has to be in a special controlled climate. He did eventually wind up at John J. Foley through his union, he was a former Corrections Officer.

I'm trying to understand -- you know, I know that there were some people that showed up at Longwood and possibly Hampton Bays, Eastport-South Manor who were then redirected to go to the nursing home. What do you guys do? You know, do they have to go to the general population shelter first to be processed, or is there some kind of a disconnect going on here that they should have known to go to the nursing home? And why wasn't that being publicized, that the nursing home was an evacuation shelter for people with special medical needs?

MS. BARKER:

This is part of the partnership I was referring to before that we've been working with the County and the MRC. There's been recent changes to sheltering that we need to be accessible to all people, which pretty much says you can only have medical needs shelters or special needs shelters. So we've been working to be functionally -- we've been working to be accessible to people with functional medical needs. So this is a plan that's been very, very new in this County and very new to New York, actually, so we're on the forefront of it working as a group together.

I can't speak right now to the John Foley Center, I think that's maybe more a question for people after me. But we did have medical reserve core personnel there and there was extra additional resources at, I believe it was Robert Frost and Hampton Bays, but I'd have to check my notes on that, to deal with people who have these needs, and if they had medical needs after that they should have been brought to the appropriate place. And I know that I can't speak to the JEEP process, how that worked, but I know that FRES representatives who are here can.

LEG. BROWNING:

It's just that I was being told that some of them were showing up and it was more like, "Well, I heard that John J. Foley is taking people," but it wasn't confirmed, "Oh, you have a special medical need, you're on a ventilator, you're on some kind of special breathing equipment that needs electricity, this is where you need to go." So I guess maybe you have a --

MR. CLEMENSEN:

Hampton Bays, not high school, Hampton Bays Community Center was the special needs shelter, that had a capacity of about 50. We became the middleman when someone showed up, someone dropping a neighbor off saying, "Okay, here's his insulin medication, here's what you need to do," we redirected them to the shelter. Through the town EOC in Southampton Town, we were able to coordinate with the Director of Human Services there to let them know we have a resident coming, but it was done very much on that reactive basis there.

LEG. BROWNING:

Did they continue -- they had their electricity the whole time?

MR. CLEMENSEN:

I can't answer that. I believe they did.

LEG. BROWNING:

Okay. Thank you.

MR. CLEMENSEN:

They had a town generator.

LEG. BROWNING:

Okay. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator Gregory.

LEG. GREGORY:

I just wanted to make a quick comment, that's all. I want to again thank you all for coming out today. I know that there were some bumps that were identified and working out some issues for our next situation, hopefully it's later rather than sooner. But I have full confidence in John Miller. Him and I, we've known each other for a while now and he's a recently new, fairly new CEO of Red Cross and I find him extremely intelligent, capable. And I know whatever issues that have been identified, he is one person in this County that I would have full confidence in to address it. So I think the schools, you guys would be in pretty good hands and working in collaboration with the American Red Cross, and I'm sure we'll see some improved results the next time it comes around. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. Thank you -- yeah, go ahead.

MS. DEMYEN:

Just a quick question. I'd like to bring up -- you had brought up the costs that had been incurred by the school districts in terms of, you know, I had to bring custodians in for overtime or --

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

I didn't want to hear her because it was money, I was afraid. But go ahead, speak up.

*(*Laughter*)*

MS. DEMYEN:

I think you got the gist. There were expenses incurred by the school districts and I heard you say that you weren't sure, you know, if the Red Cross is going to be funding any of that, or is it just that the school district is just going to be paying for it.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Yeah, and I don't have the answer. I don't know.

MS. DEMYEN:

Okay.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

But you know what? I think that's something that has to be addressed --

MS. DEMYEN:

Okay.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

-- between these groups. Because if it's the local taxpayers, we already know about school taxes, we don't want to go there, we don't want to add any problems. So it has to be funded and it is an issue. And what I don't want is, like many issues, when you ask somebody it's like, "Oh, we can't," and it's all about money; I don't want it to be about money. So whether it's going to be Federally funded, you know, maybe you guys in the Red Cross can find out and make sure the school districts have that answer.

MR. LAUBER:

I would hope that discussion sometime in the future could encourage the combination of the Red Cross people shelters and the pet-friendly shelters. Because right now they're two separate operating entities, and it would make much better sense if somehow the people and the pets could be stored and sheltered in the same facility rather than treating them in two different ways.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Sounds good to me. It sounds like a recommendation for a committee, so we'll work on that. Thank you very much for coming today. I really appreciate it. Thank you.

MR. CLEMENSEN:

Thank you.

MS. DEMYEN:

You're welcome. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. Everybody else; Dr. Tomarken, the Health Department and Foley and any other groups that helped.

LEG. BROWNING:

The Police.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Who?

LEG. BROWNING:

The Police.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Oh, the Police, Sheriffs; yeah, any County organizations here. We set it up so you have about eight minutes to speak, so you'll be able to --

*(*Laughter*)*

Well, Commissioner, usually at these meetings, you really don't have any input, everything goes so smooth and it's wonderful, and here you're the man. You've heard the situations that we're hearing, coordination. I did ask LIPA with Verizon and Cablevision to keep the Chair of the Public Safety, because of the Executive Order, that I should be in the loop, and I did say that you need to be in the loop because you're the man that really has to implement all the stuff that we talk about. So give us a rundown on how you felt it went and what lessons have come out of this and what's going to happen so that in two weeks, if we had another event, we'd be better prepared.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS:

Thank you for letting me say something. I just wanted to just bring up two subjects before I do my presentation.

Number one, as far as Verizon and Cablevision, in my seven years as the Commissioner over that Emergency Operation Center, they have never cooperated one bit with us. They may be talking to the towns, they may be talking to other people in political offices, but we, as late as this storm, requested someone from Verizon to come and we were given a phone number. We requested Cablevision to come, never got a return phone call, no one ever came in the seven years I've been running the organization, and I think it's important to put that on the record.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay, and let me just respond to that. You heard that I've told them that by October 6th, our Suffolk County Public Safety Committee meeting, we want to know how it's been established, who's going to talk to who. I would like you, then, to communicate again and remind them that you're calling on behalf of the Chairman of the Public Safety Committee and the committee so that you can report for sure at that meeting just how it's going to flow. And if they don't respond to that, then I guess you and I will have to get in a car and visit the headquarters.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS:

The other area that I'd like to address, only because it was brought up, was the concerns by the SPCA. We had spoken many times with the SPCA, they do a fantastic job for us. But I think the -- I think your members need to know some explanations here.

Number one, the center that the SPCA was talking about is the Suffolk County Fire Academy. We do our training at the Suffolk County Fire Academy because it's a County-owned building that's generally empty on weekends when we do our drill with the people. At no time was it ever mentioned that would be our only pet-friendly shelter. We have a total of four pet-friendly shelters that have been pre-identified, that were inspected prior to any event by a member of the SPCA and the Red Cross and found them to be acceptable.

The particular remark about the contract; the contract has expired, but we know how the County does with the contract. We appreciate they carried on, but there is nothing in the contract that CERT members would man pet-friendly shelters. They would assist if they were available; we were using our CERT members to answer phones. A County generator was supplied to that shelter, what the gentleman was talking about. Their mass unit came out in case -- the lights never went out. That shelter did not lose power.

The second thing was we talked about food, it was one missed meal. It was not the most ideal location that we wanted, but I think just by the vast number of people that showed up and the number of pets that showed up at that location, because in the other locations we only got 10, 15 pets. The right location was picked because the shelter filled up with people that needed help and we filled it up with pets. During the course of that evening, the SPCA was asked to open up the shelter they were talking about in Yaphank which would hold 250 people and, by the way, is a coexistent shelter, and we were told they didn't have the manpower to do it. I just want to say we have a good relation with them, but I kind of feel, being that other things were put on the record, we have to address that. Thank you. I'll continue with my normal report now.

First I want to start off by thanking all the people that came in to our EOC, everybody we touched over this event. I know a lot of the Legislators have been out to our EOC. We are 52 different agencies that you see physically sitting there at any event. What we normally do, we start looking at any event ten days out. We have constant communications with the National Weather Service, we keep a track every year of any storm that goes out, whether it be a tropical storm or a named storm and we do that. When this particular storm was coming a littler closer to us and the weather authority was really trying to put it on top of us, what we've put into place in Suffolk County, it's not unique to us, but we adopted a true FEMA is a 120-hour plan, we call it. What this 120-hour plan does is really a check list and a reminder to us that we can go through and check off the items as we get closer; I'll gladly supply any of the offices with that. What happens is if it goes along anywhere from the beginning to making sure our generators are running, make sure they're fueled up, communications down to physically opening the shelter and opening our EOC.

During the course of this event, we started having conference calls with FEMA, CEMO, all towns, all villages, our partners to the west, Nassau County, New York City and Westchester. We kept in constant contact with the National Weather Service. We e-mailed out weather notifications every four hours; that's when we got them from the National Weather Service. We had meetings with the

Red Cross on shelter locations. I think it's important to mention that the locations that we have in Suffolk County here, we have 121, I believe, shelters pre-identified. There is no plan to open up 121 shelters in every event. What happens is that we do that with an all-hazard approach. We have shelters that could be used in a hurricane, we have shelters that could be used in a black-out, we have shelters that can be used in a terrorism attack, so they're pre-identified throughout the County; some are in flood zones, so we wouldn't use them for a hurricane event.

We also had numerous conversations with FEMA on water, meals, generators, 4X4 vehicles, and any other different positions. What happened with FEMA, we -- I attended a number of meetings down in Washington on this. My partners, Nassau County, Westchester, we've met with FEMA and we've been fighting for about four years now to pre-determine -- pre-position supplies here in Suffolk County. We realize that we're vulnerable, we realize we're on the other side of the bridge. Our other concern was that just typically what happened with this storm, it came up the east coast. Coming up the east coast, we're one of the last ones to get hit. We were all concerned that we were the last ones to get supplies. I've got to commend FEMA, they -- and the State, they took over Republic Airport and they moved in the supplies. The only problem was that the supplies were sitting in Republic and we couldn't get them released. What happened after that, Upstate got pretty devastated and a lot of the supplies that, thank goodness, we didn't need were taken out. That's one of the issues that we're going to be working with FEMA on and New York State Emergency Management.

We have a supply of portable generators, and I don't mean the ones you see in the hardware stores, you know, like that. We have -- they're 50KW, 25 with a W on wheels; the County, through grants, have purchased about 25 of them. We put them out to all pre-positions, we gave them to towns, we gave them to shelters, Department of Public Works.

Our key in talking about evacuation or any major storm is our ferry companies. We had meetings with the ferry companies. We have a written plan in this County as far as evacuating Fire Island, and we knew that in this particular event, talking to the two Town Supervisors that cover there and the County Executive, that this was a real likelihood that was going to happen. To accomplish that, we have to take people back by ferry, and we also have to afford the ferry companies the opportunity to put their own equipment, their own boats in safe harbor. That was accomplished.

What we started to do, we first started it out in an progressive way was we started putting -- the ferry companies started putting notices up at their terminals discouraging people, the day-trippers, from going over, discouraging people who were just going to start their vacation in mid-week or that weekend from going over. When it started getting by Friday, the only thing they allowed, they allowed people to come back on to the main Island, but they only allowed the property owners to go over starting Friday and Saturday. They shut down, on Saturday afternoon the last ferry around was at four o'clock in the afternoon. We reversed that going back. We knew that the property owners wanted to see their property, but to do due diligence, we had to do some type of inspections over there. When we were notified by LIPA and everybody else, or Suffolk County PD, the Parks Department, everybody told us it was safe, we started to let people back in. We've done that many times, it really works out well.

One of the biggest challenges for us was that the Town Supervisors, along with the County Executive, the Town Supervisors picked out the areas that they wanted to get evacuated. The way we look at evacuations is we look at the size of the hurricane, the Category 1, Category 2. The decision was made to put out an evacuation for a Category 2 hurricane; the reason for that is a safety zone. In Emergency Management, if we're ever going to err, we're going to err on the side of safety. Roughly speaking, from Huntington out to Montauk Point, that involved probably about 221,000 people. We realized that some people would not leave, we asked them to leave. We realized that we would not be having to shelter 220,000 people also, but what that was doing was making them make a decision. Just like we as a County plan, individuals and the homeowners have

to make a decision, and what they have to do is what is their plan; is it going to be a sheltering place, is it going to be leaving and going to a relative, is it going to be leaving the Island, and we encourage them to do that. Overall, total in our shelters it was approximately about eighteen hundred to 2,000 people at any given time were in our shelters for a couple of days.

Again, we added some extra people to our radio room anticipating the number of calls. And I just want to let everybody know, the money that we invested in our new radio room, along with Suffolk County PD but speaking strictly for FRES, our new upgraded thing, we actually took more calls than we did that March storm we had last year and we decreased the time by I believe about eight seconds, nine seconds a call, which doesn't seem a lot, but it means an awful lot to the person out there having the heart attack to get the call out. So it was well -- money well spent.

We activated our CERT people. I can't say enough about these volunteers. They manned our phones and our radio in our room, in our EOC. Their President, I had to practically send her home after 30 hours, just go home; she wanted to stay and help. Our EOC opened up on a 24-hour basis. We activated our Medical Reserve Corps, we activated our County shelter volunteers which were County employees who had taken extra training to help out.

Once we opened it, we were in a 24-hour mode. Once we opened the EOC, again, like I mentioned before, we had 52 different towns, villages and County agencies, Federal agencies in there. We worked along with -- we contacted over 500 people in our JEEP Program which is our Joint Emergency Evacuation Program. This is like our special needs program, very similar to what LIPA keeps, but these are people who registered with the County. We sent out a number of Code Red which is a notification, we sent out one notification that went to over 800,000 people, that's just phones, both cell phones and hard phones in the County just trying to keep them up-to-date. We set up a phone bank in our EOC of 25 people rotating trying to take phone calls. We were getting an awful lot of phone calls. There was a lot of confusion with the public, sometimes they weren't sure.

We activated our bus routes. We realized that maybe some of those people who need that shelter who don't have any place to go, are not going to go to a hotel for a number of different reasons, we were sending buses out doing normal bus stops. What we did, we set up plans and the buses were out there picking up the people, taking them to the closest shelter. When we set that plan up, we thought about how are the ways that we're going to let people know where those bus stops were, and what we really did was just take the normal bus stop that people are familiar with, they didn't have to go looking for another sign, and the bus would stop and there were signs on the bus letting them know it was a shelter bus, and we did pick a number of people up. And then at the end of it, we also turned around and brought them back.

One of the biggest challenges we had during the storm is we had to evacuate two hospitals and one nursing home. They were located in the Islip area, Good Samaritan Hospital and Southside Hospital. To accomplish this, we put a request in through FEMA, through the EMS part of it, and we received 60 ambulances from out-of-state to come in and help us accomplish this. Our EMS Division did a fantastic job with that. They came in, they came in from as far as Michigan, Ohio, places like that. These were commercial ambulances that were contracted through FEMA, it is not an expense to us. They facilitated with the evacuation of those two hospitals and the nursing home, and at the end of the event they actually facilitated repopulating those hospitals for us and then they left.

What we also did, we put a request in to FEMA for what we call an incident management assistance team, an IMAT team. We got a group of gentlemen here from Ohio, what they did, they actually freed up a lot of our people from some of the everyday planning. We gave them a problem, they did a fantastic job for us.

The next thing would be after the storm, we're up to after the storm now. We realize that there's a lot of insurance questions out there. We've been pushing it out on our website, we've gotten New York State insurance, State Insurance Department to come down. They had some people in the Dennison Building, they're going to come back again to answer just insurance questions. They're not agents. What they do, they work for the State and if you have a problem with your insurance company or what you think is covered, they'll go over your policy with you. Starting this Saturday, we're going to have the Claim Center open, that's going to be at the Dennison Building. And what this will afford the people to do, the President gave us a declaration, and actually it's a very rare declaration that we get in this part of the country, but what it did, not only did it give us what we call PA which is Public Assistance, you know, reimbursement back to municipalities -- and the answer to your question before, Mr. Chairman, is that yes, the expenses to the school district will be collected through BOCES back to us and they will be reimbursed for this event on that.

What it also gave is it gave us what they call individual assistance. Now, the individual assistance we refer to as IA. In the past, we experienced it out in Riverhead and places like that, what it was was more of an SBA loan at a low interest rate, telling people to fix it. What we got in this particular declaration, not only did we get that, but we also have a grant program which is equal to \$30,200 which is an outright grant to the homeowner or the business that lost something. The only requirement that they're going to -- we're putting out, and if you're speaking to any of your people, is that they need to have documentation of the loss and they need to have documentation either from their insurance agent or their insurance company that they're not -- this is only for uninsured loss. So if they had \$10,000 worth of damage and they had a \$5,000 deductible or a thousand dollar deductible, they are open to get the thousand dollars back, but they need a letter from their insurance company as far as that the loss they incurred or the deductible they had was not covered through their insurance.

I appreciate the opportunity to talk. Again, I want to cooperate. I thank everybody for what they did. I do agree, I heard the Chairman mention it before, I'd be willing and really open to sit down with any members of this committee to try to come up with some type of reasonable protocol on how FRES can handle, work with, whether you -- whatever comes out of it, we are very much open to sit down and work with you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you, Joe, and you always have been. You know, on my part, I'm not looking to micromanage. You're the expert. I guess what I'm saying is include us in your -- you have plan and you have strategies, and just like you have to, I'm sure, inform the County Executive, we want to be on that list so that somebody -- it's what I've told Verizon and them, I want them to let me know, as the Chair of Public Safety, and I'll take the responsibility to make sure everybody in the Legislature knows what's going on, a plan. But I don't really want to tell you -- and I don't think any of us should tell you how to do it. I think you've done a great job. Just tell us what we -- in other words, I didn't go down to the Command Center because I figured I don't want to be in the way. But in the future, because I'm on the list with the County Executive and the Deputy County Executive, I probably would go there so that I would have first-hand knowledge and be able to call everybody. I don't want to usurp anybody's authority, I just want to be like all the rest of the Legislators, kept in the loop. And we don't want to add a burden, we want to just be able to be able to facilitate the information to the community. So whatever plan you want, we'll help you with it.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS:

Actually, my own opinion on what would work is that if you, amongst your own body, decide on or take turns -- I personally think it would work a lot easier if you could assign or have one member of your staff, someone's staff, on a rotating basis, being there taking notes. It's a very hectic place, there's a lot of things going on. I have no problem with the one-point contact, I can't deal with 18 but I can deal with one. But I think that if the person was there, like we were experiencing this past week on a much smaller level with the PO's people, is to have somebody right in there. We have

briefings every so often, anything comes up, the knowledge -- it's a tough thing to say, but I think maybe with 18 offices, maybe you can rotate that particular duty for a couple of days.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Right. And we did have somebody from -- and she gave us some great information. Okay, we'll do that. Thank you. Chief White.

LEG. CILMI:

Can I just ask you a question?

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Oh, I'm sorry. Yes, Legislator Cilmi.

LEG. CILMI:

Yeah, just very, very quickly. Commissioner, thanks very much. You mentioned that the program through the Federal government for the reimbursement for businesses; do you have any idea, does that apply to loss of business as well as loss of property or damage?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS:

I'm not 100% sure on that. I believe so. I believe there is a loss, you know, it is a business loss, seeing that for days they were shut down. But what I would suggest is that it's going to be up on the website, or there's an 800-number for FEMA that's published that can call up, it would save them a trip going down to, say, the Dennison Building or any place like that. Call up and they'll definitely be able to answer that question.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay. Thanks very much.

CHIEF WHITE:

Thank you, Chairman. Thank you, Vice-Chairman Gregory, the entire Legislature. Just in case some of you don't know me, I'm Mark White, Deputy Chief of Homeland Security and Anti-Terrorism for the Suffolk County Police Department. And why is the Anti-Terrorism Homeland Security Chief sitting here? Because Emergency Management and the personnel from Emergency Management and the Police Department come under my responsibilities.

So what I think I'll do, I know you're looking to focus on a few issues, it sounds like, based on what I've been listening to here this morning and this afternoon, I think I'll build a little on Commissioner William's comments about some of the things that went on, some of the major activities that went on in the County, and hit on those and certainly answer any other questions or concerns you might have.

You know, from an overall perspective, you know, at the County level and at the Police Department level, I think things went really well. You know, it's an old Emergency Management adage that you can't start planning for the emergency during the emergency, and I think this proved that and it proved that, you know, over and over again throughout the incident. And again, I'll speak from the County level, the coordination level at the Emergency Operations Center and from a department level.

We weren't reinventing the wheel. You know, as soon as, as Commissioner Williams mentioned, we had any kind of inkling that the storm was coming this way, we started mobilizing our assets and doing our pre-planning. And we've done that planning over and over and over again, as well as training and exercises on an annual basis. So it was really gratifying to me to see that come together where you didn't have to point out every little piece of the puzzle that had to be covered, it was covered. And it comes to something that Legislator Gregory said, managers make the plans

and the revisions happen at the operational level. So we leave flexibility and adaptability in those plans so they can get carried out at the operational level. And I'll just say at the operational level, you know, the men and women Police Officers of the Suffolk County Police Department really answered the call and, I think, went above and beyond innovating and working through difficult circumstances to try to help the public at every turn.

The two issues I think I'll focus on, which are -- there are numerous pre-storm, during the storm and post-storm activities that the Police Department gets involved in. I'll just focus on these two keys, and one was evacuation. The Fire Island evacuation, as Commissioner Williams said, has run through our mind numerous times because we've sat together through Earl and Hannah and Wilma, the ones that missed, and practiced and got these operations down pat in our heads. So all we have to do is implement it and put the procedures and plans in place. And in this case, our Marine Bureau was really the ones that helped communicate that issue on Fire Island to the communities and get the word out through vehicles and PA systems, through driving the communities, through walking the communities, from going through the communities on bicycles trying to make sure that everybody heeded the word to evacuate.

So while it's a mandatory evacuation, we all know it doesn't get followed up with arrests or incarceration if you don't leave. So we try to encourage people to voluntarily leave. And from all accounts, almost all the people of Fire Island did leave with maybe, I've heard estimates in the hundred range that didn't leave the Island. So the word got out and by nine o'clock on Saturday night, our Marine Bureau personnel had left the Island and the people were on their own til after the storm. Luckily there were no horror stories and the storm wasn't as devastating to the Island as it might have been, so that went well.

The unsung heroes I think were -- the thing we've also done, we've done nursing home evacuation exercises and hospital evacuation exercises, and trying to move hundreds and hundreds of patients, ill patients out of two hospitals and a nursing home, to me, I thought was going to be a monumental task with all kinds of after-action difficulties and problems. And I'm not speaking only on the Police Department end, I'm speaking on -- for the County's end. You know, Chief Delagi in the Department of Health sitting there night after night going through, working with us on the Police Department and then FRES to make sure everybody is on same page and providing the resources was really a pleasure to watch. It went almost flawlessly, in my mind, from where I was looking, far more smoothly than I could ever expect in an event that difficult to pull off.

The Police Department, our role in that is to provide security. And as the Superintendent from Longwood mentioned, not the 7th Precinct Officers that came and helped -- and we developed post-Katrina all these teams and we have a Crisis Action Team, they're moderately, intermediately trained officers, a little above the patrol level, not as high as our Emergency Services Officers, who practice this over and over and over again so they knew what to do. And we, as part of the County plan, at any County-sponsored shelter, provide law enforcement officers at those shelters within the Police Department. And outside the Police District, it's up to the individual Police Department and the Sheriff's Department to provide that. So we provided that and it seemed to go well. Also provided it for the hospital evacuations and nursing home evacuations. It's just important to have the security presence there, escorts for all these ambulances and traffic control, as you know, can be an issue in those kind of events. So that was the main evacuation part of the hurricane puzzle that we worked on.

The other one was the sheltering. That Crisis Action Team, and we have a Medical Crisis Action Team that I might have talked to the Legislature about in the past, were put into play. The Medical Crisis Action Team is especially trained officers at a higher medical level, paramedics or critical care EMT's as well as volunteer doctors that were out assisting. The shelter operations, we have officers in each one of those spots. We really had no issues whatsoever.

You know, and Legislator Browning was interested in the sex offender issue. You know, the signs get posted. We -- from the Probation level who is responsible to try to identify sex offenders coming in, can do what they can to come in. There's one place where a Red Cross National Policy is in place, and I talked about it to the Red Cross representative in the Emergency Operations Center, that they will not share the actual, for privacy concerns, the listing of their identification of people who have come into the facility, so we have to try to seek that out on our own. You know, it's a potential -- what we're really doing by posting the signs is putting the sex offender on notice that it's up to them not to come in, with a very difficult follow-up. So I don't know if that's something in this review that you can look at with the National Red Cross, but it might be something you might want to take a look at there.

You know, after action-wise, I know, Legislator, you're looking for gaps. You know, we've filled a lot of gaps over the years because we keep trying to identify those, but in every situation, you know, there's information sharing issues; I won't say call it communications because it wasn't the radio communications or the phone communications, they all worked fine. It was more the people having information -- kind of like what you're looking for, Chairman -- not giving the information that would be significant to someone else to that person in a timely basis. So we're going to have to go back and make sure that there's sharing, because we have different operation centers, the Police Operations Center for Patrol in the Police Department, we have the Emergency Operations Center for the entire County here, and we've teams that we work with. So we're going to work on that. But I would be pleased to answer any questions that you have.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Yeah. The only question I have, you mentioned the primary role that the Marine Bureau played. And I know at this time of year, it's usually where we start to downsize that a little bit. Did you have adequate Marine Bureau staff to facilitate the increased responsibilities?

CHIEF WHITE:

The last time --

MS. ORTIZ:

You have to press the button.

CHIEF WHITE:

Oh, I have to keep my finger on it. All this time I'm sitting here.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

They only do that for us.

CHIEF WHITE:

You didn't give me that instruction. The last time I was at the other microphone, I spent the whole time standing there. You know, one of the things we've learned, and I know the Legislature appreciates it, and from a Police management perspective at the Chief level, we give our Precinct and Bureau Commanders, in a situation like this, the ability, because they know what best they need to get through this situation, to bring in the resources they need. No restrictions are put on them. If they need a few additional people, they get a few additional people. Do we ask them why? Of course we do. That's with our Crisis Action Team, one of the reasons we use our Crisis Action Team instead of precinct personnel is wanted full precinct coverage for all of your precincts so we had this other group come in to take these tasks so the regular precinct officers could stay out on patrol. So I spoke to Inspector Jantzen, as matter of fact, about this yesterday and he felt he was sufficiently staffed to take care of everything, and we've really gotten no indication from anybody on Fire Island of any issues.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Good. Good to hear. Thank you. Legislator Cilmi.

LEG. CILMI:

Chief, Commissioner, thank you very much for both being here. Maybe you both heard my question posed to the LIPA folks and the National Grid folks earlier with regard to ambulance companies and fire departments and such having sort of instant access or information transmitted to LIPA when they lose power. Is that something that you in your roles can sort of oversee and see that that gets done? I mean, to have two ambulance companies just either in or in the immediate vicinity of my district alone that were out of power through Thursday afternoon to me is just unacceptable.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS:

It's under my -- yes, we can make that work. Second is that it was always under my understanding that all firehouses, all ambulance, EMS agencies, police stations, hospitals, all critical structures was on a list for LIPA already that when they lost power in those area, they were pre-identified. But we can work up a system where we had the LIPA rep right in our room, in our EOC, and everyone we brought to him, we've had ones like that, too, is that they're taken care of right away. But we will check with LIPA to make sure that list is up-to-date, because it was supposed to be only pre-determined Long Island locations.

LEG. CILMI:

And there should be some sort of an automatic notification. You know, I mean, the technology is simple, you don't have to wait for Smart Grid technology to happen with National Grid or LIPA. You know, when I have -- you know, when I burn a hamburger at my house and smoke goes up into my eyes, there's an alarm that sends a message to the alarm company and they send a message to the fire company and they call and it should be as simple as that, really, I think. You know, certainly the fire departments and the ambulance companies know about alarms. So I appreciate it if you can sort of oversee and get back to me on that.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS:

Absolutely.

LEG. CILMI:

Thanks.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator Browning.

LEG. BROWNING:

Okay. Mastic Beach was evacuated and it had a mandatory evacuation in the Moriches area, in my district. One of the concerns that I had, in fact, I went to the nursing home, one of the residents from Mastic Beach was in the nursing home and he was concerned about, "I didn't leave my lights on and I'm afraid then somebody is going to know I'm not home." And the minute you put out a notice that there's a mandatory evacuation, Joe criminal says, "Oh, yeah, it's Christmas." And I can tell you, I've heard from a number of people that -- one lady actually went back to her home because she forgot something, and when she showed up at her home there was a guy trying to get into her house. A couple of days later, I think it was the Sunday morning, the Monday morning, they went back to their home, they still had no electricity, they were in their home sleeping and two masked men came into their home. I know a lot of the Mastic Beach residents didn't leave their homes because of the fear that their homes would be broken into, and I heard about a number of break-ins. There was one in {Osprey Point}, his home was broken into, stuff was taken.

So my concern is is that when you make a mandatory evacuation, I know you have to announce the mandatory evacuation, however, what did the Police Department do? Because I know there were Police Officers not working, not called in for overtime to secure that area and make sure that there's extra patrols and that the homes are being monitored? Because when I went down, you know, the gentleman at the nursing home gave me his key, I went down to his home with my husband, we turned on the lights for him. But I can tell you, we went down the street and there were a number of homes with no lights on.

You know, also there was another gentleman, he's a paraplegic, lives in Mastic Beach, he wouldn't leave his home, and he needs 24/7 nurse care and he did not want to leave his home. And he said, "I'll be fine without electricity." So I'm just a little concerned that while we're making mandatory evacuations, we're really, as far as public safety is concerned, we're not providing additional staffing to make sure it's patrolled, whether it be cars driving around the neighborhood, pulling them over, checking on them, checking their license, making sure that they're from there. I know it wasn't -- we were just talking about mandatory evacuation; it wasn't a Marshal Law.

CHIEF WHITE:

Right.

LEG. BROWNING:

So, but at the same time, what can we do in the future for that problem? And also, I'd like to know how many actual break-ins there were, if we can -- if you can get me that information.

CHIEF WHITE:

Yeah, it's not moving to the future. There were things going on -- and you talk about getting communication to the Legislature about what is and what isn't happening, having a representative in EOC is probably perfect. You know, it works for all the agencies here. You have somebody -- and if I would recommend is what we do in the Police Department is have that EOC representative gather information and having periodic conference calls with the entire Legislature.

You know, maybe we should even publicize it better. And I talked about the long list, laundry list of responsibilities for the Police Department. One of the things we do immediately in an evacuation where it's still safe for the Police to be in that zone is order anti-crime, anti-looting, public disorder patrols for those areas, and that was done in Mastic, in Mastic Beach. As a matter of fact, we had gotten rumors at the EOC while I was there on that overnight, somebody calling in to the EOC that homes are being broken into, suspicious persons. We had people out on those -- those weren't true at the time, there were some -- well, I'll give you the stats, Legislator Browning, on exactly what did happen during that time period, but those were unfounded at the time. So we do have that. I'll say this, every single car, bringing in more people, the Precinct Commander can do that if he needs to.

We had the National Guard come in and work with us after the event. They got there toward, I guess it was Sunday evening, to come in and ride around, teamed up with the Police Officers. But every single vehicle in the precinct that was operable was out patrolling, so you wouldn't have had anything to put somebody in to put additional patrols. At that point, every car was out. So that's something that's on our radar screen, it's something we compensate for immediately. And we certainly give the Precinct Commander, if he has -- if he identifies a problem, and they really didn't identify a major problem at that point, at least in that overnight area, and I haven't heard of one since. But I'll get those statistics to you and make sure that we're not missing something.

LEG. BROWNING:

I appreciate it. And last but not least, the nursing home; why it was never advertised that our nursing home was an evacuation shelter. I was at a press conference with the Town Supervisor and they asked, "Well, what shelters were there? How many people in each of the shelters?" And the

supervisor didn't even know about the nursing home, and we actually had, I believe, 109, and I know that Mr. Carey can confirm that. One hundred and nine people were at John J. Foley Nursing Home, and that was -- it was never advertised.

And again, going back to the JEEP applications, you know, I have had a lot of people sign up, fill out those JEEP applications. They're special needs people. What happened in this evacuation, where were they sent?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS:

If I may bring up Joel Vetter, he handled that. But we did -- I can -- we called every one of those, over 500 of those JEEP applications. But Joel was the one directly involved in this probably and could probably answer that better than I would.

MR. VETTER:

Good afternoon. My name is Joel Vetter and I work for Joe. And during this past event, the -- there's been some subtle changes over the last four to five months of what you guys might know of JEEP and the planning efforts that have gone on between FRES as well as The Red Cross. We started several months ago meeting with both FRES staff, Health Department staff, Red Cross, about co-locating. A lot of the terms that we've come used to, "special needs", has been changed to where there's now "functional needs", you've heard that term, which a huge portion of the population, of our JEEP population, about 40% of them, are functional medical needs. A lot of them were placed in regular shelters.

The reason why specifically that Foley was not advertised as a shelter is that that is a managed resource for skilled care. So people who were dependent on ventilators, not just an oxygen condenser or a high tech home care with nursing staff is what was logistically contacted and moved into Foley. The large portion of the population of Foley, 34 of them were clients that required skill medical care and came with some type of caregiver or support system with an additional 18. It also left us the balance, working with Kevin and the entire staff over there at Foley had. Post event, when we had a nursing home up in East Northport that needed to be evacuated from their evacuation center, we had that resource that we were able to move them.

The concern and the through process was that if we advertised it as a shelter, we would have been overrun and not been able to have managed the medical skilled care patient that required the service. It also would have had an impact long-term on the hospitals. A lot of these patients -- and we had arrangements for six other ventilated children to be moved there. They just had, I guess, a sense of urgency prior to the storm, instead of waiting for the resources to come get them, and they self-referred to the hospital. It takes away from ventilator beds in hospitals and the ability for the hospitals to care for their clientele and/or post-event type of patients.

So that's the main reason why it wasn't advertised. It's more of a -- not a special needs shelter, a skilled shelter is really kind of what I described it as to the Red Cross when we ran with this co-location shelter management aspect.

LEG. BROWNING:

Wouldn't it be a good idea to have somebody there that if it is being advertised and they're brought in and they're being assessed, because we have skilled medical people at the nursing home, that they may say, "Okay, maybe this is a person that we don't really need to come here." Especially when they're coming before the actual storm hits, that they can be even assessed at the nursing home and redirected to wherever they need to go. Because, you know, my constituent was sent to Hampton Bays.

MR. VETTER:

Yes.

LEG. BROWNING:

And the distance between Mastic Beach and Yaphank and Mastic Beach and Hampton Bays is certainly quite a difference. So it just didn't make sense to me why he was being sent in the wrong direction.

MR. VETTER:

Well, it's not so much that it was the wrong direction. I mean, yes, there was an inconvenience to that one individual and I understand the client specifically. And we did have the ability at Foley to analyze and we did transfer out a small portion -- I believe it to be maybe one or two, we'd have to check with Kevin -- that were then sent from that Foley center to a special needs shelter and a general shelter; one even involved a dog which there's a whole side story to go into. For that one client that you're are specifically speaking about, yes, he did have the comforts of Foley and he was able to be moved there. In our initial discussion with him, because of the urgency that he wanted to leave, we had to prioritize which patients were truly in what flood zones and SCAT-wise between the bus system of the County, what resources were needed; who was being able to be moved by a wheelchair vehicle versus an ambulance.

By taking some of the people away by ambulance instead of a SCAT bus, they lose their power chairs, their other degrees of ability and they lose -- they become immobile. It's also a degree of safety. If we start to move these patients inappropriately to wrong locations, there can be a negative outcome. So, you know, even though there was that initial inconvenience that he was going to be going based on the need to be at the shelter, you know, I guess the degree of trying to manage the greater good for the larger portions instead of the individual.

LEG. BROWNING:

Okay. I thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator Anker.

LEG. ANKER:

Hi. My question has to do with evacuation notification. My area over in Mt. Sinai was evacuated along Cedar Beach. And I actually heard about it -- I had a friend call me and she said, "Did you hear your area in Mount Sinai is being evacuated?", and I said, "Well, no, I didn't." So I was unaware, so my concern is how is that notification getting out? And this is prior to the storm, prior to the phones being interrupted.

I did take a tour of the Emergency Center and it was great. I was very impressed by what you do there. And someone had suggested, or actually I suggested a robo-call, and that representative said, "Well, you know, we can actually pinpoint the streets and send out those robo-calls." Is that accurate and can you do that in the next -- in an upcoming storm?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS:

The answer is yes. We don't -- we call it a Code Red, it's actually a system we have, it's capable of -- we did it once for the whole County during the storm and we called over 200 -- over 800,000 calls. It enables it to do it like 2,000 calls a minute, and we've used that and we will use it again.

LEG. ANKER:

Why wasn't it used in this storm?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS:

I can't -- I don't -- I can't answer that question. I have the same question. You know, why -- how we got that word out. I know we did it through media. The media was putting it out, but that was -- I'll get back to you why that was not used this particular time.

LEG. ANKER:

Okay. Yeah, the way that residents were notified in Mount Sinai was the Mount Sinai Fire Department, they physically went out there, they knocked on doors, and I guess a neighbor called another neighbor and said, "Hey, we're being evacuated." But again, that needs to be looked at.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS:

Okay.

LEG. ANKER:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. Thank you very much for coming and giving us that information. We'll be in touch.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

While we're having the Health Department come up, I was just wondering, does the Sheriff's Department have any comments or concerns?

MR. KNEITEL:

No.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

It's a beautiful thing.

MR. KNEITEL:

Not unless you have a question.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

No. Thanks very much. We might need another chair. We'll always find a chair for the Medical Examiner.

COMMISSIONER TOMARKEN:

As you can see, we have several people from the department who participated in, so I think the easiest and the most efficient way is to let each person just give a brief summary of their activities during this episode and then I can give some comments and you can answer questions.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. Thank you very much.

COMMISSIONER TOMARKEN:

Bob, do you want to start?

MR. DELAGI:

Thank you, Commissioner. And thank you, Mr. Chair and members of the committee. My name is Bob Delagi, and in this event I served as the medical --

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Excuse me. Commissioner, do you want to stand there? Because we'll get a chair for you.

COMMISSIONER TOMARKEN:

I'm okay.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. All right, thanks.

MR. DELAGI:

No problem. Thank you. My name is Bob Delagi, in this event I served as the Health and Medical Branch Director in the County's Emergency Operations Center, along with members of my staff and other representatives from the Department of Health Services that you'll hear from today.

As you've heard, our role basically began on Thursday the 25th with the pre-planning process and we stayed through this, through the repatriation effort, and actually went out to handle an emergency at a nursing home on the 1st of September. And our mission was very, very broad. In addition to the hospital and skilled nursing facilities evacuations that you've already heard about, we managed several evacuations of adult homes and their subsequent relocation; we had a role in the sheltering issue; we maintained a relationship with Mr. Vetter and FRES for the special needs population and the functional shelters with the Red Cross; and we also maintained close contact with the End-Stage Renal Disease Coalition that handle all of the private dialysis and free-standing dialysis centers in the County. And our job, through our emergency support function, was basically to deal with those issues while simultaneously monitoring the status of our Emergency Medical Services and hospital systems and their continuity of operation through the storm.

And we do this through a very robust plan that we have actually been working on and testing circa 2005, and this is actually the first time that we actually had to do it in real life. And as you heard Chief white allude to, it worked flawlessly, and that was due, in large part, to the robust relationships that we have developed over the years with our partners, not only from the Suffolk County Department of Health Services, but the New York State Health Department, the Regional Resource Center which is based out of Stony Brook Hospital and is responsible for disaster preparedness for all of our hospitals. We partner with the Inter-County Health Care Alliance which is the consortium group for skilled nursing facilities and adult homes, and we partner with the Nassau/Suffolk Hospital Council, a constituent group for all hospitals.

And we convened that emergency support function during this entire operation, and we are thankful that we had participation from every one of our partners. We held regular briefings with our hospitals and our nursing homes, we worked in coordination with FRES with regard to our local Medical Reserve Corps, the New York State Medical Reserve Corps and the Suffolk Emergency Nurses Association. And our mission really became down to dealing with the impact of the storm and then preparing the Health Department for our recovery responsibilities with regard to environmental impact, and you'll hear from others about that today.

On the short side of things, because I know time is an issue, I can tell you that our plan worked as designed. But obviously, like everybody else, having done it in real life, we have identified some gaps that we seek to fill and modify our plan based on our actual experiences. In the concept of what can we do better and what did we learn, I think we need to review and enhance our JEEP Program, and I think you've heard that we're already in process with the Red Cross through FRES in doing that. I think we need to enhance our reporting mechanism for residential and businesses to report health related issues; and again, that's more of a post-storm recovery issue than it is during an event. I think we have an opportunity to enhance our ability to mobilize staff, particularly on a weekend. Because this storm came on a weekend, that helped us in a lot of ways, but one of the ways it hurt us was to try to corral staff on a weekend. So I think we need to enhance our process to deal with that.

And then to review and reaffirm our priority listing for residents of our special needs population and our entire health care infrastructure. And we have been working very, very hard to get people to self-refer into the JEEP Program, but I think we sometimes fall a little bit short because people are still afraid to voluntarily give their information to the government. So we need to look at ways to

market that program.

And with regard to Mr. Cilmi's comments about, you know, power restoration and health care infrastructure, I certainly agree, we need to monitor that very, very closely. And I would be very, very interested in working with LIPA/KeySpan to allow us access to have the registry of their priority restoration clients. Because we share that information, we share the responsibility for those people, and it would be very, very helpful for us to know, particularly those with special health care needs, those on sophisticated medical equipment, and those health care facilities, nursing homes and adult homes, it would be very helpful for us to know where they stand on that.

In summary, that was our activity from the EMS seat, and we certainly remain available to answer any questions that you have.

COMMISSIONER TOMARKEN:

Do you want to do questions individually?

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

No, I'd prefer to let everybody have their say and if there are individual questions, we'll deal with it.

COMMISSIONER TOMARKEN:

Okay. Jason?

MR. HIME:

My name is Jason Hime, I'm Supervisor of the Bureau of Drinking Water in the Division of Environmental Quality. The Division of Environmental Quality consists of Office of Water Resources, Office of Waste Water Management, the Public Environmental Health Laboratory, the Office of Ecology and the Office of Pollution Control. All of these offices were in their preparedness stages prior to the storm. Walter Dawydiak and Pat {Floria} reached out to each of the offices to see what necessary preparations were being made.

In summary, we reached out to all of our staff to make sure County vehicles were fueled up before we potentially lost power during the storm. We made sure that we had enough sampling equipment, we communicated with other offices like the Food Control Unit, just in case there were some additional response and needs in their unit after the storm. We reached out to our public water suppliers to make sure that they were implementing their emergency response plans, and those small suppliers that do not have emergency response plans, we made sure to educate them, let them know what kind of additional equipment or needs they could start procuring before the storms.

As far as the Office of Waste Water Management, the sewage treatment plants, they are all designed with redundant equipment and emergency power; they should have enough emergency power generation to last three days. The Public Environmental Health Laboratory, I should leave that to the Medical Examiner, but their building does have a backup generator. Their staff were ready and prepared to respond in the event emergency samples were needed to be taken.

The Office of Ecology, equipment was pulled out of the water to prevent it from being damaged. And again, their staff were being prepared to send out advisories for the severe weather and closed beaches following the storm. The Office of Pollution Control notified marinas where they had underground storage tanks and just basically let them know to take precautions, make sure things were filled up to be able to use that as ballast and, you know, prevent spills in the event there was flooding.

Following the storm, as part of the response and recovery. The Office of Water Resources, we reported no major public water supplies, had to issue boil water orders. Of the major water supplies like Suffolk County Water Authority, Riverhead, Hampton Bays, Dix Hills, Greenlawn, South

Huntington Water District, none of those supplies had issues maintaining water pressure in their distribution systems, in large part due to emergency power generation and adequate storage of water prior to the storms. They did, however, lose LIPA service at several facilities, along with some of the telemetry that they used to be able to monitor whether pump stations are operating or not, make sure that the chemicals are appropriate. They're going out into the system as designed, so they needed to get additional staffing resources out at those facilities following the storm.

Precautionary, boil water orders were issued at 13 of the approximately 260 regulated public water supplies in Suffolk County, as well as a result of tropical storm Irene. Several of these were small transient, non-community water supplies. There were two small community water suppliers, basically they had generators but people continued to use their water, flushing toilets, getting drinks of water through the storm. They had lost power service, could not refill their potable water storage tanks and they were without water for more than four hours. The guidance from New York State Department of Health is that we issue a precautionary boil water alert following a storm and where the lack of water pressure for more than four hours, or if there is a chance of flooding.

E-Coli and Tola Coliform were detected at only one location due to flooding, that was down the Barrier Beach in the Town of Babylon. The system has since been fluorinated and the system will be upgraded in the near future to prevent another occurrence. Boil waters have all been removed with the exception of two that are pending results of acceptable bacteria tests. Our staff in the Office of Water Resources collected approximately 75 samples throughout the County, again, with limited resources due to a variety of personal problems following the storm, we mobilized staff in priority areas such as the western portion where there was more rain water received where we could have expected additional flooding. We wanted to look out for back syphonage into the mains. We were aware of the -- I think it was one of the DOT crews that was performing a clean-up effort, they did damage a hydrant in one of our major water districts, we got people out, got staff out there to take samples, make sure that area was safe, as well as other areas on the north and south forks, and Shelter Island. All sampled results from these were acceptable with the exception of the one beach down in the Town of Babylon.

We did receive one request to collect a water system at a house on Fire Island that obviously did not have power.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Could I stop you for a minute?

MR. HIME:

Of course.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

You're very detailed. I'm not going to remember really the details. I guess if you're telling me that basically the water supply was safe, there were some concerns but we dealt with it, that's great. Is that what you're saying.

MR. HIME:

In general, yes.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Because unless I have all those numbers in front of me, I don't think I'm going to remember it, and if you wanted to pass it to us. But my concern is is that you're telling me the water supply was good, we had some concerns, we took care of it. And if you can tell me how you'll deal with the concerns in the future, that would be great; if you can't, work on it. I mean, do you feel comfortable that everything that could have been done was done?

MR. HIME:

Yes.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Then you know what I would say? Next.

*(*Laughter*)*

MR. HIME:

Okay.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you very much. And I'm sorry, but we're already almost over the whole other committee's time, too.

MR. SORTINO:

Good afternoon. My name is Chris Sortino, I'm Chief of the Bureau of Public Health Protection and our response centered around assisting food service operators in the County. We have nearly forty-six hundred food establishments, and helping them assess damage and loss and insuring that the food intended for service was safe. We weren't able to reach 112 of the 114 communities in the County and assess the food that was being served at these locations or intended for service. The only two communities that we were not able to reach were Fisher's Island and Davis Park and we did that over the phone.

We prioritized our work based on the available information from LIPA on their website, and we also focused on the areas with the greatest number of outages and the greatest density of food service establishments. We visited nearly 2,000 food service establishments and found that 81% of them had no problem or made proper plans prior to the storm using a generator, ice or dry ice, and we found about a quarter of the establishments did have a problem with the major loss of power and had to discard food. We found only 16 food operators operating with imminent health hazard during our investigations, and obviously proper action will be taken against them. These were establishments operating without electricity, without refrigeration, etcetera.

For the future, I guess in a normal circumstance, what happens is LIPA normally contacts us when there's a power outage at a food establishment and we do respond to that. In this circumstance, we were not given that information and I guess it was a lot of the discussions that were -- that we had this morning. They only had information on power outages in general, they didn't distinguish between commercial and residential, so we really had to just go to the areas and determine it on our own.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay, excellent. So that if we could figure out a way how you could know where the restaurants in the area are out, that would be helpful to you.

MR. SORTINO:

Absolutely.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. All right, we'll have to -- let's make a note that we've got to try to work on that. If we can help you in the Legislature, by all means, if it's calling somebody or doing something we will. Okay, thank you.

MR. FLESCHER:

Good afternoon. My name is Art Flescher, I'm the Division Director for the Division of Community Mental Hygiene. In Mental Hygiene, obviously we worked with our voluntary agencies and partnership, developmental disabilities, mental health and addictions that are responsible for housing and other services within the community. Our responsibility directly involved our methadone services and we were very fortunate that the storm was on a Sunday and we were able to have a great deal of advance notice in terms of planning and was able to provide take-home medication for the few clients that don't already receive it on a Sunday. So we were able to adjust schedules and pretty much plan accordingly.

We also were able to address some of our dependency upon computerization at this point and our need for power and some of the things going forward we're going to look at. In Riverhead we have generator capacity, in our other clinics we don't; we may look at capability in that regard for at least one other clinic. We also were able to do some drills in real life that we've planned on in the past in terms of having the ability to continue manually dispense medication, things we always did historically, but nowadays we're used to the automated system and everything else. So we were prepared for several days of outages if we needed to be; but fortunately that didn't happen, so it actually went very smoothly. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

I just wanted to mention that one of the Superintendents had complimented the mental health professionals, and I guess that was under your group.

MR. FLESCHER:

We did have some volunteers in some of the shelters. Again, as Mr. Delagi mentioned, one of the problems is it was on a Sunday, it was on a weekend, so it was hard to get people and I think people wanted to stay with their families. But we did have some people and with the Red Cross we were able to do that. And it's nice to have people that just, you know, are of comfort during that time when people are frightened and unsure of their situation.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Certainly, if you get me the names, I would like to send a personal thank you for them to come out.

MR. FLESCHER:

Sure, I would be happy to do that.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you. Yes, sir?

MR. CAREY:

Kevin Carey, Administrator, John J. Foley. The plan worked perfectly, we had no problems whatsoever.

*(*Laughter*)*

LEG. BROWNING:

He's good.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

You've got to love him, don't you? That's why I like the Foley Center; they do what they have to do and they don't brag about it.

I know that you weren't on the list, so to speak, but we did hear of how it worked out. It sounded like it was a good system, but did it cause any problems for you?

MR. CAREY:

No, none whatsoever. We took in 59 from Birchwood Suites and 53 from the community with special needs. Staff worked great; Joel Vetter, anything we asked for we got at our front door 15 minutes later. No problem at all.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator Browning.

LEG. BROWNING:

No, I just -- I want to say the staff alone did a tremendous job. And you were -- you know, the leadership in there I will say is what made it go so well. And even the staff have glowing comments about you and what you do with the staff and they were more than happy to accommodate you and make you look good, I guess.

But, you know, just real brief, I got -- I know that there was a number of people that were requested, it was a share-your-thoughts form, and I have a couple of them here:

A Mastic Beach resident said, "I never expected to spend my stay under such excellent conditions. When I was leaving home, I thought I would be taken to a special shelter with certain medical accommodations, but I wound up in an almost luxury spa."
That's what he -- I don't know if it's a he or a she.

A Bay Shore resident; "Your whole staff was great; friendly, courteous, and they even changed my wound. Very nice people throughout the nursing facility that I talked to. It was very nice staying there"; that person stayed Saturday, Sunday and Monday.

Another Bay Shore resident; "I feel if for some reason I need the care of John J. Foley, I would -- it would be my luck to be there. The staff is very nice and caring."

Another Bay Shore resident; "I had a wonderful time there. The staff was excellent and I will recommend this place to my friends."

A West Islip resident: "In a very bad situation, we were evacuated to your facility. Thanks to all of you, it turned out to be a very happy experience. Your nurses and all of your staff have been wonderful to us, caring and experienced people who took care of our needs, especially Vera and Nurse Maddy and Margie."

Another one, a Patchogue resident; "My stay at John J. Foley Facility was above and beyond excellent."

So I have to tell you how thrilled I was. And you know I popped in on Saturday and I went up to visit a few people on the floors and I met a family from West Islip and their son with special needs, he had a special machine. Again, they told me how wonderful the facility was, how well they were treated, they were so happy to be there. So a big kudos to you and to the staff at John J. Foley. Thank you very much.

Applause

MR. CAREY:

Thank you. I wasn't even -- I should have mentioned the staff; the staff did a fantastic job.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Like always.

LEG. BROWNING:

Like you say, and they are thrilled. I can't tell you how many times I've talked to the staff at the nursing home and, you know, one of the things -- their morale has turned around, they're much happier. And they say that the administrator is what makes their work experience there much better. So thank you.

MR. CAREY:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. So going from a facility --

MR. RAPPAPORT:

Excuse me, I just want to say something. I'm Glenn Rappaport, I'm the Executive Director of Birchwood Suites that stayed at John J. Foley, we were the facility that was evacuated to them after being evacuated to another facility, and our staff stayed with them over there as well. But it was a wonderful facility and they took very good care of our residents. So I wanted to say that.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Does that count for your two minutes, three minutes? I was going to give you --

MR. RAPPAPORT:

Well, I still have a minute and a half then.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

No, actually, you're interrupting our process. You were -- I was going to give you a chance to speak.

MR. RAPPAPORT:

Oh, I apologize. It's just they were complimenting and I just thought that would be a good segway into that.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

We'll count it as done. Thank you.

MR. RAPPAPORT:

Thank you.

LEG. BROWNING:

And I do want to add, you know, being that we're running so late, I think most of the committee is here from the Health Committee, so I don't think it's really necessary for you to stay around. Okay? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. As I was saying, going from a facility that everybody enjoyed being to maybe a place where we don't want to go, to the Medical Examiner's Office.

*(*Laughter*)*

MS. MILEWSKI:

Legislator, I won't take that personally.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Not that we don't want to see you, but we wouldn't be seeing you probably.

MS. MILEWSKI :

All right. Now, I'll try to be brief, too. You know, the Medical Examiner's office has two concerns when we have a circumstance like this hanging over. We have to maintain our operations 24/7, because unless the roads are deemed unsafe to travel, we still have to go and respond to people's homes and to public areas to take care of our deceased citizens and deal with the needs of the family. So that case work does not stop just because there's a tropical storm coming, and our facility regularly gets anywhere from one to two cases to up to ten a day. So you can see how logistically, you know, our work continues. We had excellent response from our generator. It's not just a concern for the comfort of the staff that are there 24-hours a day, but we have evidence in the form of biological samples and other issues to be concerned about, so there's a lot relying on that generator. Everything was fine operationally.

One thing we did not anticipate, and it segues a little bit into a problem that came from the EOC, was once the tropical storm was approaching on the Friday, funeral directors were not coming to our facility to remove decedents. And with more cases coming in on a steady basis through the weekend, you could see that we could potentially run into a bit of a problem. There were various reasons being given, some of them being safety related, but it's not worth getting into here. And then we had a call that said that after the evacuation of living patients from one of the hospitals, I think it was Southside, the decedents were -- bodies were still there, would we accept them. So we're the County Morgue, this is our responsibility. We were able to handle everything, but I must say we were not expecting to be concerned about it because by the end of the weekend we were concerned about it.

The other thing that we concerns with when we have a circumstance like this coming is the possibility of mass fatality. Fortunately, we didn't have this to deal with, but it very much falls to us to manage that. So I'm going back on the same issues that involve a facility and potential storage, and if the incident involves any other complications that might count as a secondary disaster for us internally. I would ask that some consideration be given to possibly our being involved on the EOC level, because no one else really looks out for that concern or accepts that responsibility. So in terms of a problem area that I would request a solution to, that's the only thing I have to offer.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Excellent. Is there any provisions for transportation during these kind of -- because you have to go on a scene, I guess, right?

MS. MILEWSKI :

Oh, yeah. We have a unit of -- well, currently eight or nine ambulance drivers, this is the service they provide for the County. And generally speaking, there are other instances where a Medical Examiner's cases per se aren't involved, but decedents do need to be moved and stored. We are the County Morgue, so we are fortunate to have that staff capacity 24/7 in our budget.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay, great. Legislator Gregory.

LEG. GREGORY:

Thank you. Thank you all for coming here today. I just wanted to make a quick comment to the Medical Examiner. Myself and my Chief of Staff had a tour of her facility yesterday, four hours we were there and we looked at everything and her staff was so accommodating and they're very extremely talented and they're really an asset to the County and it was a pleasure to meet them. I was slightly disappointed. My -- I tried to verify what I see and learn on Miami CSI, you don't have the fancy equipment but you certainly do the same types of job descriptions and things like that. And it's a pleasure to learn what you do and, you know, you do it very well for us, so thank you. And please forward that to your staff.

MS. MILEWSKI :

Thank you, Legislator. You know our facility is always available if anyone has any questions to come and see what we do and how we do it.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you. Doctor?

COMMISSIONER TOMARKEN:

Well, I think the only thing that we've learned, and I shouldn't say the only thing, we had a pre-tropical storm meeting with our staff on Friday afternoon and we will have another one to recoup and reevaluate all the systems.

One of the things that we've seen happen -- as you can see, there's a large number of departments that are impacted, and one of our biggest problems is accessing staff availability during the storm and afterwards to come in and do what they're trained to do, because people have their own issues, their own family issues, their street may not be passable. So we need to develop a transportation network and system to help each other, maybe use some County facilities. But that's an issue that -- because you can't predict who's going to be isolated, who's going to be available and who isn't; it's a tricky situation that we have to spend more time in developing.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. Well, I feel pretty secure that you were able to do the job with the staff that you had and that our water supply was safe. There is one issue that we have to look at, I guess, to how to get a better notification of restaurants that are without power so that we can get your inspectors there. But if there's anything else, please pass it on to us and we'll look at how we can help you implement any changes at all. Okay? Thank you very much for hanging in there.

All right, I have -- I don't know if Raymond Mayo is still here.

MS. ORTIZ:

He's not, he had to leave.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

He left; okay, then.

MS. ORTIZ:

He left these.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

We actually have an agenda, so let's -- let's go to that as quickly as possible.

Tabled Resolutions

IR 1124-11, tabled resolution, ***Adopting Local Law No. -2011, A Local Law to change the formula for distribution of funds and fees generated from the seizure and forfeiture of vehicles (Schneiderman)***. I'll make a motion to table.

LEG. GREGORY:

Second.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Second by Legislator Gregory. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? ***Tabled (VOTE: 4-0-0-1 Not Present: Legislator Kennedy)***.

IR 1624-11 - Defining child concealment in Suffolk County (Romaine). I'll make a motion to table.

LEG. GREGORY:

Second.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Second by Legislator Gregory. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **Tabled**
(VOTE: 4-0-0-1 Not Present: Legislator Kennedy).

IR 1625-11 - Adopting Local Law No. -2011, A Local Law to amend Resolution No. 395-2011, A Local Law to protect animals in Suffolk County from abuse (Cooper).

I'll make a motion to approve.

LEG. GREGORY:

Second.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Second by Legislator Gregory. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **Approved**
(VOTE: 4-0-0-1 Not Present: Legislator Kennedy).

IR 1689-11 - Adopting Local Law No. -2011, A Local Law mandating prompt reporting of children missing in Suffolk County ("Caylee's Law") (Cooper). I'll make a motion to approve.

LEG. GREGORY:

Second.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Second by Legislator Gregory. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **Approved**
(VOTE: 4-0-0-1 Not Present: Legislator Kennedy).

Seeing no other business, I will adjourn the meeting.

(*The meeting was adjourned at 2:09 PM*)

{ } - Denotes Spelled Phonetically