



Lending a Helping Hand

August 27, 2011 is a day that left a mark on Pitt County that many would like to dismiss from the mind; however, with so many lives affected by the wrath of Hurricane Irene, escaping the memory of this day will be extremely difficult. Hurricane Irene left a path of destruction in Pitt County and all of Eastern NC. Gusty winds (80-100 mph) and lingering rain (10 to 14 inches) damaged homes, left businesses (for a short time) unserviceable, closed schools and universities, and sadly, resulted in the loss of life. Many residents in Pitt County continue to wrestle with the storm's aftermath, but despite the widespread disruption the accompanied Hurricane Irene, there was a glimmer of light that touched the lives of so many affected by the storm.

WITN-TV and Inner Banks Media (Chamber Members) partnered with the Pitt County Chapter of the American Red Cross, also a Chamber Member, to hold a fundraiser to help Hurricane Irene victims. The devastation wrought by the hurricane prompted one of the largest sheltering efforts by the American Red Cross in years and assistance was certainly needed. Many volunteers, including Chamber staff members, assisted with the all-day telethon that netted over \$321,000. News outlets across the state ran positive stories complimenting the efforts being made by these three entities. WITN-TV General Manager Chris Mossman, also a member of the Chamber's Board of Directors, worked around-the-clock before, during, and after the storm and was the reactant that fueled the fundraising efforts. "We're blessed to have such a strong community that's full of caring people and good corporate citizens," said Mossman. "Many of our friends and neighbors were devastated by Hurricane Irene, and people throughout our region quickly jumped in to help us put this event together. Many members of the Greenville-Pitt County Chamber of Commerce jumped in to help and make monetary contributions. We wouldn't have had the fundraising success that we had without the assistance of Susanne Sartelle and her team."

In times such as these, local businesses and dedicated community leaders understand the significance of giving back to those in need. During tough economic times, when it can become so easy to tighten up, our community set aside personal complications and sacrificed private gain to lend a helping hand to the victims of Hurricane Irene. This overwhelming show of support and commitment to help our community get back on its feet is simply one more reason why we can all be proud to call Pitt County home.

Advocacy Article | Submitted on September 6, 2011 | Trent McGee