

Residents come together to fill sandbags

By KAYLA LOKEINSKY

klokeinsky@lakecityreporter.com

With Hurricane Irma rapidly approaching Florida, it was all hands on deck at the Lake City Public Works headquarters on Friday as local residents rushed to fill sandbags in preparation for the storm.

As people shoveled sand into burlap sacks and loaded their cars, it wasn't just adults jumping into action. Several Lake City children showed up with their parents, ready to pick up a shovel and help get ready for the hurricane.

"We do what we gotta do," said Adeon Farmer, a 13-year-old student at Lake City Middle School.

Farmer, who was taking turns shoveling sand with his friend Jordan Coppock, 20, isn't just concerned about himself and his family when it comes to being in Hurricane Irma's path. He's also worried about his animals, including dogs, chickens and a hog.

"I have to move my animals to higher ground," Farmer said.

At the next sand mound over, Lydia McAuliffe, 9, was helping her mother Tracy fill sandbags. Despite her age, Lydia was working, loading shovel after shovel of sand into a bag.

"I'd rather be at school," Lydia said as she scooped up more sand.

School was canceled in Columbia County on Friday, so Tracy brought Lydia out to help fill sandbags and prepare for the hurricane.

"We're going to pass them out to our elderly neighbors. They just can't come up here and get them."

— Edward Kight

School has also been called off Monday and Tuesday.

Columbia High School student athletes and members of student government also assisted with filling sandbags on their day off.

Despite the looming threat and the hard work she was putting in, Lydia said she isn't worried about Irma, and plans to spend Monday watching YouTube videos as the hurricane rolls through.

"I'm excited," she said.

While Lydia is looking forward to the storm, her mother Tracy, who owns True View Window Cleaning, is focusing on getting ready. Having to worry about her family, her home and her business has led to Tracy being proactive when it comes to being hurricane proof.

"We get water in the back of our house so we wanted to keep it away," Tracy said about getting sandbags. "We just have to be prepared."

Another family getting prepared for the storm was the Medearis family. While Michael Medearis filled his sandbags, his son Chevy, 6, watched from the back of his dad's pickup truck. Although he was too small to get up and dig, he wished he was able to.

"He won't let me help,"

Chevy said while pointing at his dad.

Although Chevy wasn't able to help his dad, there were several people at the sand piles helping others in between preparing their own bags. Lake City's Edward Kight helped Farmer and Coppock fill a sandbag before returning to his friend Austin Davis. The two men had a pickup truck fully-loaded with sandbags.

Although they did have some for themselves, they were mostly getting sandbags for people they knew couldn't get them themselves.

"We're going to pass them out to our elderly neighbors," Kight said. "They just can't come up here and get them."

"They're way too heavy," Davis added. "If they waited in that line they'd be here forever."

Lake City Public Works was not only providing residents with bags and sand to make their own sandbags — they also had piles of prepared ones, which they were loading into cars for people who needed assistance. The line for the prepared sandbags was about 15 cars deep, prompting those who were able to go to the self-serve station.

Sandbags are still being distributed today from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. They're available at three locations: Columbia County Public Works (607 NW Quinten St.); Columbia County Fairgrounds (438 FL-247); and Fort White Community Center (17579 FL-47).



PHOTOS BY KAYLA LOKEINSKY/Lake City Reporter

Lake City residents Edward Kight (left) and Austin Davis fill sandbags in preparation for Hurricane Irma. Kight and Davis filled sandbags for themselves and the elderly.



Michael Medearis (left) loads a sandbag into his truck where his son Chevy, 6, watches.



COURTESY

Congressman meets with emergency officials ahead of Hurricane Irma

Congressman Neal Dunn, R-Panama City, stopped by the Columbia County Emergency Operations Center on Friday to discuss preparations for Hurricane Irma. From left: Columbia County Assistant Manager Scott Ward; Columbia County Sheriff Mark Hunter; Dunn; and Columbia County Manager Ben Scott.

Verizon offering data relief for customers in hurricane's path

From staff, wire reports

To all of its Florida customers in Hurricane Irma's path, Verizon Wireless is saying, "We've got your back."

Through midnight Monday, Verizon is giving postpaid customers talk, text and data relief with no overage fees while pre-paid customers receive an extra 3 GB for data.

Wireless communication is essential during severe weather, Verizon officials said, which is why the Verizon network team prepares year-round to ensure a strong performance during times such as a hurricane.

Following the initial offer, Verizon will continue to closely monitor the storm's path and impact and make additions and adjustments as needed, and will communicate those details as those decisions are made.

"We understand that our network is

"We understand that our network is never more important than when disaster strikes. This offer is just one way that we are showing our commitment to the entire state of Florida as this historic superstorm continues on its path ..."

— Russ Preite, southeast Verizon president

never more important than when disaster strikes," said Russ Preite, president of the Southeast Market for Verizon. "This offer is just one way that we are showing our commitment to the entire state of Florida as this historic superstorm continues on its path to make landfall there."

For continuous updates on Hurricane Irma, visit <http://www.verizon.com/about/news-tag/emergency-preparedness>.

LABOR DAY SPECIAL
September 5-12

Working Dog Hip Evaluation Package

- Exam • Sedation
- 2 digital X-rays
- Starter pack: Joint management diet

\$391.82

386-752-8899
www.CaringHandsLC.com

• NOW OPEN •

Y.J. STORE

» Blue Bell Dipped Ice Cream
» Local Produce
» Asian Pottery & Crafts
» Toys & Ornaments
» Asian Noodles, Rice, Dried Seaweed
» Asian Sauces: *Sriracha, Chili Sauce, Hot Pepper Paste, Wasabi, Vinegar, Kewpie Mayonnaise*

Deli coming soon!

388 N Marion Ave, Lake City
386-487-5640

**get dentures
hand-crafted
on-site for a
great price.**

dentures
starting at
\$399
upper or lower denture

AspenDental
simply easier™

+ denture money back guarantee²
+ dentures ready in days

Lake City
386.406.6096

For a list of practicing dentists, please visit AspenDental.com.

¹Starting price is based on a current denture wearer selecting a Basic single arch replacement denture. Price does not include relines. Procedure code S140, S130, S110, S120. ²Denture Money-Back Guarantee applies to all full and partial dentures and covers the cost of the permanent denture(s) only. The guarantee period begins upon insert of final denture or hard reline and refund request must be submitted within 90 days thereafter. Denture(s) must be returned within 90 days after refund request date. Offers must be presented at first visit. Offers expire 12/31/17. ©2017 Aspen Dental Management, Inc. Joshua Estes DDM DN 19347.