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Emergency plan in action

Hurricane/Tropical Storm Irene caused widespread devastation to people on the East Coast. In Vernon, residents were impacted by high winds and rain that caused flooding and property damage. Major power outages occurred from downed wires and trees.

During the storm, Vernon had an emergency action plan in full force to protect residents and to provide information as it became available.

On the Saturday night of the storm I went to Rockville High School, which was open to provide shelter to those in need. During the overnight hours I made several trips to the Vernon Safety Complex to be briefed on updates. Mayor Jason McCoy and Emergency Management Director Mike Purcaro led a skilled team that was constantly evaluating the weather and the needs of residents. Our fire, police, public works, and parks and recreation departments were all staffed and ready to assist residents through the height of the storm.

After the storm, Vernon Center Middle School was open for shelter and showers for those without power. Residents were also able to shower at the community pool and charge electronics at the police station.

My thanks to McCoy and Purcaro for including me in the emergency operations meetings during the storm. A huge thank-you to all departments involved who ensured the safety of our residents. And, most important, thanks to our residents who heeded warnings to stay off the roads and prepare for the storm. Many residents had a trying time after the storm, especially those who went several days without power. What made me most proud was watching residents after the storm. People lent each other ice, water, shelter, meals, generators, and chainsaws for clean up.

Being mayor means more than just attending opening events and parades. The mayor must be an effective leader in times of emergency. The situation afforded me an educational opportunity to see the town emergency plan in action and the mayor's critical leadership role.

I have worked hard during my term on Town Council and have shown my commitment to our town by attending every meeting, actively participating in discussions, and have sought every learning opportunity to prepare to serve as your mayor. Working together we can change the shape of Vernon.

James Krupienski

Vernon

The writer is a member of the Vernon Town Council and is the unaffiliated petitioning candidate for mayor.