

Sandy's wreckage reminds of need

The Jet Star roller coaster, stranded in several feet of water offshore from Seaside Heights, NJ, may be among the most famous images from Hurricane Sandy, which hit the New York and New Jersey coast last October.

The resort town reopened this spring with high hopes that the tourism business would help it recover from the storm. Though some of the amusement park rides on the town's waterfront are open, the doomed roller coaster still stands just offshore—a looming reminder that full recovery for this town, and others damaged by Sandy, is far from complete.

In the days after towns like Seaside Heights were hammered by the storm, the victims focused on basic needs first. Most who were left homeless found shelter, along with the elderly and disabled who couldn't go long without power or fresh water. Once most people were safe and sound, the recovery began. Thousands of people with damaged or destroyed homes and businesses began the long process of cleaning up, applying for insurance and aid, finding contractors, replacing possessions and rebuilding their homes and their lives.

As the letter carriers of New York, New Jersey and surrounding states affected by Sandy can attest, full recovery is a slow process. They see it happening every day on their routes. Debris in the street is gone. A once-damaged house is patched. A customer who left town for temporary shelter reappears in a rebuilt home. But it takes months or years to put a life back together, and insurance and government aid only go so far.

That's why letter carriers support the Postal Employees' Relief Fund (PERF).

PERF provides assistance to postal employees who are victims of natural disasters or fires. It provides grants ranging from \$1,000 to \$14,000, depending on the total amount of qualified loss after insurance and other



Photo by Tom Parr

relief assistance, to both craft workers and managers.

"Letter carriers have really responded to the need to help our fellow postal workers after Hurricane Sandy, and we need to keep that trend going," NALC President Fredric Rolando said. "This storm hit our postal family hard. At least two postal workers died, and others lost family members. Hundreds lost their homes or significant chunks of property. Flooded or damaged postal facilities disrupted daily life for thousands. There were letter carriers who woke up the day after the storm and didn't even have a uniform to go to work in because everything they owned was washed away."

Letter carriers responded immediately by sending donated uniforms, essential items and cash to their brothers and sisters in the path of the storm. While most are back on their feet, many postal workers are just now facing the financial stress that a disaster can bring after insurance claims are settled and government aid expires. For many of them, PERF fills that gap and helps them recreate a normal life.

Since applications from postal workers affected by Sandy are still coming in, PERF needs to sustain its resources to make sure help is available for everyone who needs it. PERF also needs to be ready to help other applicants who lose homes or property in fires,

tornadoes or other disasters.

You can mail a check to PERF at P.O. Box 7630, Woodbridge, VA 22195, donate by credit card online at its website, postalrelief.com, or text 50555 to make a one-time donation of \$10 (other charges may apply). You also can give to PERF through the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC); the CFC number for PERF is 10268.

If you need help from PERF, visit its website, postalrelief.com, for eligibility and application information, call 202-408-1869 or send an e-mail to perf10268@aol.com. **PR**

**A harm to one
is a harm to all**

Donations to PERF can be made:

- Online at postalrelief.com
- On your phone by texting "PERF" to 50555 (\$10 donation)*
- By sending a check made payable to "Postal Employees' Relief Fund" in
- By contributing to PERF through the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) by designating #10268

Your donations are tax-deductible.

*See details on text donations on the back cover