

Agnes' Schuyler Visit Cost About \$1 Million

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WATKINS GLEN — Agnes' visit to Schuyler County left over \$1 million in property damage.

By itself, that's quite a news item. But compared to surrounding counties, it was a drop in the bucket. Irving A. Davis who operates an official U.S. Weather Bureau gauge at Hector, said 9.63 inches of rain fell June 21-23. That's 3.56 inches the 21st, 3.25 inches the 22nd and 3.02 inches up to 5 p.m. the 23rd. Normally, Davis said, 3.5 inches is the average for the month.

Schuyler's role in the '72 flood was one of support and aid to flood victims, the majority of which came from Corning. Although the county escaped "major" damage, the volunteer labor was worth billions.

The county's road system suffered the worst damage. County Highway Supt. Paul B. Beebe, estimates that it will take \$305,000 to repair town roads and bridges and another \$390,000 for county roads and bridges.

All town and county roads and bridges are open. Beebe admits that it's not as bad as he thought it would have been at first. One bridge on the Jackson Hollow Road was washed out but a temporary crossover was installed, he said. Some creek channels will have to be cleared of debris to protect county bridges during the next high water, he added. "My biggest problem was the phone," he continued, "people wanting to help."

Farmlands took a beating in Schuyler to the tune of \$674,000, said James T. Stevens, county executive director of the Agriculture Stabilization and Conservation Committee. A tour by the ASCS disaster committee revealed \$435,000 lost in crops such as corn, wheat, hay and cropland pasture.

Erosion caused another \$80,000 loss to croplands through scouring and washing. Wind damage to the county's vast vineyards amounted to \$156,000. Equipment loss was only \$2,000 in the form of motors and parts and \$750 in fencing was lost. On the plus side, no livestock, buildings, equipment and milk were lost, he said.

Stevens said that farmers can begin repair and restoration now because initial approval of funds under federal emergency conservation procedures has been given. That's a good indication that aid monies are forthcoming, Stevens said.

Sewage treatment plants proved to be the most costly loss to Schuyler's two biggest villages. Montour Falls Mayor Anthony Pulos estimates it will cost \$62,600 to repair the newly renovated Falls facility. However, the plant is fully operational.

"It would have been a lot worse if firemen and other volunteers hadn't put in long hours attempting to keep the plant pumped out," Pulos said. Volunteers worked steadily from the night of June 21 to June 22. As the waters continued to rise on the 22nd, Pulos ordered everyone out. But they returned early June

23, finally finishing the job the 24th.

The village's reservoir is full of debris and is unusable, Pulos said, and he estimated it would take \$70,000 to clean it out. Ironically, the village maintained drinkable water service throughout the flood by pumping from a well dug with federal funds received after the July, 1970 flood. The aid monies were earmarked for reservoir clean-up but Pulos convinced the "feds" that it would be better used by digging a new well.

The village-owned Hayes Hill Road was heavily damaged by rushing water and will require about \$5,000 in repairs, the mayor said. Other street damage was slight, he added.

Watkins Glen Mayor Joseph J. Fraboni estimates it will take about \$50,000 to repair the village's sewage treatment plant located at the south end of Seneca Lake. The plant is operating at about 50 per cent capacity, he added.

Watkins residents were still boiling water Saturday. A railroad bridge at the end of 12th St. was clogged with debris but has been cleared by state crews, the mayor said. Flood waters have receded in other communities but Watkins still has a potential problem in Seneca Lake. The lake rose almost four feet and hasn't gone down appreciably.

William P. Sirmiele, owner of "Capt. Bill's Lake Ride," has been out of business because his docks are inundated. Offshore breakwaters are almost covered and a brisk north

wind combined with the high water level could peril the village, he said.

Damage to cottages along both sides of the lake remains unknown but many docks and boats are reported lost. Cottage owners have been unable to enter the structures because of the continuing high water level. Many cottages are surrounded by water and there has been at least one unconfirmed report of heavy damage to one cottage at Long Point about 20 miles north of Watkins.

Major damage is in evidence at Barnard's, a trailer camp on Lamoka Lake near Tyrone. Tyrone Creek which enters the lake at the camp is clogged with debris near its mouth. As a result, water has been diverted through the camp, heavily damaging several camps and undermining others.

Larry Boyle, a year-round resident at the camp, said attempts to get aid from state and government agencies have proven futile. Clearing the creek of debris and gravel near the camp would divert the stream back within its own channel, he said.

Homes and cottages on nearby Weller's Island were damaged by high water ranging up to two feet. Although the dwellers evacuated June 23 at the request of the Tyrone Fire Department, most were back cleaning up by last Friday. Unlike Seneca, Lamoka receded to a livable level.

Tiny Schuyler Hospital at Montour Falls, in the midst of "winding down" for the move to its new facility on West Hill, suddenly found

itself inundated with patients from the Corning area. With the help of volunteers locally and professional help from Corning and points north, the hospital rose to the challenge under the direction of Dr. James J. Norton.

Local industry was not seriously affected by high water. International Salt Co. at Watkins, lost some production when pump-houses drawing water from Seneca Lake became flooded. But the loss was small, said James A. Luce, engineering and general maintenance foreman.

There was no interruption of production at the Watkins Salt Co., said Franklin P. Hinman, executive vice president. That company "sandbagged" pump-houses and suffered no damage, he said. During the peak of the flood, the company was unable to ship salt but the Penn Central Railroad has since resumed shipments, he added.

Although the Erie Lackawanna Railroad also serviced both plants and has been out of operation, the Penn Central should be able to pick up the task, Hinman said. No appreciable damage was reported at Shepard Niles Crane and Hoist Corp. in Montour Falls.

The rest of the Schuyler story is being written by the volunteers from all fire departments engaged in cellar pumping to the teenagers caring for the evacuees to the hundreds of households doubling up with refugees.