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Toms River Mayor Announces Plan to Re-populate Ortley Beach

TOMS RIVER TOWNSHIP- Mayor Thomas F. Kelaher has an updated plan for the re-population of Ortley Beach.

The Mayor is pleased to announce that he and the Toms River Council have been steadfastly working with the utility companies to get most Ortley Beach residents back in their homes as early as February 4, 2013.

In accordance with Governor Christie's requirements for lifting the State of Emergency, Paul Daley, the Acting Emergency Management Coordinator, prepared and submitted a letter to the Ocean County Office of Emergency Management on 1/11/13, requesting that the State of Emergency order from October 28th, 2012 be lifted for most of Ortley Beach, beginning at 8:00 am on February 4th, but it does include conditions. Only properties with all four utilities in service will be allowed to re-populate.

Through meetings with NJ American Water, TR Municipal Utilities Authority, NJ Natural Gas and JCP&L, Mayor Kelaher has been assured that there service will be restored for most properties in the west and middle sections of Ortley by February 4th. Portions of the eastern section of Ortley Beach from Rt. 35 North to the ocean may not ready for full service, although the water company has stated that there is potable drinking water for all homes that are connected to NJAW.

Status of utilities:

- **The TRMUA states most of the west and middle zones are ready for sewage flow. Although work is progressing on rebuilding 3 major pumping stations, the system is currently operational.**

- **NJ Natural Gas has re-pressurized areas of Ortley that can safely accept gas service. Repair to certain isolated gas mains in Ortley and re-setting the meters will be complete by Feb. 1st, with the exception of some properties east of Rt. 35 North.**
- **JCP&L is working with the municipality on its master plan to rebuild their infrastructure for portions of Ortley East of Rt 35 North; however JCP & L has finished restoring power to properties in Ortley that can safely accept service**

“This is a coordinated effort with all four utility companies, (Water, Sewer, Gas, and Electric) working swiftly in a sometimes dangerous environment,” Kelaher said. “Our plan early on was to re-open Ortley Beach in sections, due to the massive destruction found on a lot of streets in the eastern section closest to the beach. Some roads are still so damaged that the electric company is unable to put in utility poles allowing for electricity.”

Please remember that while the services may be available, residents should make sure that they have had the correct inspections to make sure their services are turned on. Homeowners are advised to contact the utility companies if they have specific questions about re-connections.

Getting truthful information

Mayor Kelaher also recommends that residents stay informed with accurate updates by visiting the township website at www.TomsRiverTownship.com for the most complete information and access to forms.

“There is so much misinformation and rumors going around that I’m afraid residents are starting to believe the blogs and Facebook posts. I implore residents to stick with the information found on our website. If you don’t have access to a computer, read the local papers or call town hall for updates. Obviously the rumors about not allowing anyone back into Ortley aren’t true, so please visit our website if you can. There is also a section on the website devoted entirely to the matters involving Ortley Beach.”