

\$18 MILLION IN DAMAGE

Carteret County whipped hard by Hurricane Bertha

by **PAUL R. SCHMIDT**

Staff Writer

EMERALD ISLE — After causing an estimated \$40 million in destruction in Onslow County, Hurricane Bertha skipped north to slam neighboring Carteret County with the tune of an estimated \$18 million more.

Emerald Isle, a barrier island town whose main yearly attraction is a beach music festival that draws nearly 20,000 people each May, saw the worst of it. The storm caused an estimated \$15 million in damage there, said Town Manager Pete Ellen.

Mr. Allen said winds gusted to 110 mph. Bertha left uprooted trees, downed power lines, broken windows, demolished

piers and damaged boats.

Emerald Isle Pier lost a 50-foot chunk of its 1,000-foot length.

"We're trying to decide what we're going to do, rebuild or walk away from it," said Ken Heaverly, who has owned the pier for 38 years.

Emerald Isle residents hoping to assess damage to their property Saturday were turned back by law enforcement officials and told to try again around noon today.

Cape Carteret, a community of 700 just a few miles northwest of Emerald Isle, also received significant damage, mostly from trees that fell on mobile homes. Bertha also tore a large portion of the roof off the town's lone drug store, Kerr Drug. No injuries were reported.

Atlantic Beach, about 15 miles northeast of Emerald Isle along Bogue Sound, saw

89-mph winds and minimal damage. Residents were allowed to return to their homes by mid-afternoon.

But the town was the scene of one of the storm's dramatic stories. About 5:30 p.m., just after a storm surge flooded Morehead Avenue, a crane broke loose from its mooring and began floating down the road.

"We sent a very brave police officer over to the other side of the bridge to get the crane owner and bring him over to try and lock onto his crane," Town Manager Kym Cox said. "We managed to do that. I was on the high-rise bridge at the height of the storm and it was probably one of the scariest things I've ever done."

Richard Sear of Winston-Salem took his 48-foot sailboat six miles out on Core Creek in Morehead City on Thursday and managed to survive Friday's storm with

the vessel intact.

"You have to stay on board to protect your boat," said Mr. Sear, who admitted getting frightened once the vessel began pitching sharply back and forth.

Other boat owners were not as fortunate. Two boats in Gallant Channel off the Beaufort's Waterfront ran into trouble.

The *Sea Rose*, a 38-foot, sloop-rigged sailboat slammed into a seawall near the Duke University Marine Laboratory in Beaufort around 6 p.m. The boat's owner, who had been denied entry under a nearby drawbridge, tired of circling around in the waters after about an hour, said Jim Welch, a Duke graduate student who talked with the owner early Saturday morning.

"He said, 'I guess I didn't do a very good job of docking.'" The crash left a large hole in the boat's right hull.

Another boat, this one a larger steel vessel from New York broke loose from its mooring with its owner aboard, and grounded on Carrot Island, about 500 yards away.

Carteret General Hospital in Morehead City reported 10 storm-related injuries, including two people who suffered carbon monoxide poisoning from using a gas-powered generator in their home. Five people were treated for orthopedic injuries and three for lacerations, said Ida Gaskill, the hospital's clinical nursing supervisor. All were treated and released.

All but 3,000 of Carteret-Craven Electric Cooperation's 28,000 customers lost power, said Bill Race, manager of finance and administration. As of 8 p.m. Saturday, he said, the company had restored power to about 75 percent.

Bertha puts dent in Outer Banks tourism

Staff and wire reports

NAGS HEAD — Spared the fury of Hurricane Bertha's wind and waves, the Outer Banks still took a economic hit from the storm.

Officials and merchants told tourists to come back Saturday after three days of evacuations that cost an estimated \$4.5 million a day in lost business.

"The beaches should be wide open this afternoon," said Clarence Skinner, chairman of the emergency group that ordered evacuations Wednesday. All travel re-

strictions for Dare County were lifted at 6:30 a.m.

The Outer Banks had little damage but didn't escape unscathed.

Bertha was blamed for nine deaths during the storm's journey, and the only one in North Carolina was at Kitty Hawk. Ruby Jackson of Elizabeth City was killed when her car slid into oncoming traffic there Friday.

Winds gusted to 70 mph in Dare County as Bertha skirted the area to the west.

Two people received minor injuries. One was a television photographer who walked off a dock, and

the other was a pedestrian who walked in front of a truck, Mr. Skinner said.

Elsewhere, six people had minor injuries at Camp Lejeune, and a Greenville man was hospitalized after a tree fell on his house.

Though the Outer Banks lost business, Mr. Skinner said the early evacuation was the right move.

If the storm had hugged the coast, he said, it could have come up the Pamlico Sound and slammed Dare County.

"In hindsight, the decisions that were made were the correct deci-

sions," Mr. Skinner said.

He said travel to Ocracoke Island, accessible only by ferry, was still closed. Sand washed ashore by high water covered approximately four miles of the only road between the Hatteras ferry terminal and the island village.

Extra heavy equipment will be sent to the island as soon as ferries can carry it, Mr. Skinner said.

In Jones County, one of the hardest hit inland areas, homeowners were urged to control their use of drinking water because power failures left officials no way to pump water to their 9,700 residents.

New Hanover Regional Medical Center

will sponsor a
Community Health Forum
Tuesday, July 16, 1996
7:00-9:00 p.m.
Cameron Education Center
Coastal AHEC Auditorium