



## OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

### NEWS RELEASE

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RELEASE: October 29, 1997



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### **Gov. Christie Whitman, Red Cross President Elizabeth Dole Visit AC Flood Victims; Thank Volunteers and Help Raise Recovery Funds**

Governor Whitman joined American Red Cross President Elizabeth Dole in Atlantic County today to thank volunteers for their efforts during severe flooding in August, visit with recovering flood victims and help raise funds for continuing recovery efforts in the county.

"When the skies dumped more than a foot of rain on this part of the state last summer, people responded with a deluge of their own, a deluge of action, caring and support," Whitman said at the Absecon fundraiser hosted by the Atlantic County Chapter of the American Red Cross. "The people we honor today exemplify what I mean when I talk about the one family of New Jersey."

Atlantic County continues to recover from the effects of the 500-year flood last August. At Governor Whitman's request, President Clinton declared Atlantic County a disaster area under Presidential Disaster Declaration # 1189 last month, making the county's residents, businesses and local governments eligible to receive federal disaster aid.

In addition to meeting with over 100 Red Cross volunteers who helped during and after the flood, Whitman and Dole met with the Cool family, which was hit especially hard by the storm. The family of three's home was invaded by up to 18 inches of water during the flood, destroying their heating system, carpeting, furniture, appliances, walls, flooring and other parts of the house while it remained under water for two weeks. Besides receiving assistance from the Red Cross, the Cool family has received federal emergency aid.

Since Atlantic County was declared a disaster area, the state has been working with the Federal Emergency Management Administration to disburse federal grants and loans to families and businesses adversely affected by the flooding. As of October 23, over \$930,000 in housing assistance, over \$37,000 in individual and family grants have been disbursed, and more than \$370,000 in loans from the Small Business Administration approved.

Michael Cool, an employee of Stockton State College, his wife Merryl and daughter Sheera, 13, live in Smithville.

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