

Lt. Governor Kim Guadagno Commends Determination of Small Businesses During "Open for Business" Stops in Belmar, Lavallette and Ship Bottom

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Overcoming Property Damage, Revenue and Inventory Losses, Jersey Shore Businesses Are Reopening and Preparing for Spring and Summer Seasons

Trenton, NJ – Recognizing the determination and resilience of small businesses along New Jersey’s shore, Lt. Governor Kim Guadagno today met with owners, employees and patrons at small businesses in Belmar, Lavallette and Ship Bottom, encouraging New Jerseyans to support businesses in these towns as they recover and rebuild after Hurricane Sandy.

Continuing her “Open for Business” visits to small businesses that have overcome damage and obstacles caused by Hurricane Sandy, the Lt. Governor stopped at Federico’s Pizza & Restaurant in Belmar, Lavallette Hardware in Lavallette, and Ron Jon Surf Shop in Ship Bottom.

“The businesses I visited today exhibit the type of grit and determination that has defined our state and residents following Hurricane Sandy,” said Lt. Governor Guadagno. “Their resolve to rebuild and reopen is inspiring and moving, and more importantly, provides a sense of normalcy for their employees and patrons by committing to open their doors in time for Spring and Summer. I want to thank these businesses and communities for supporting our friends and neighbors along the shore as we continue to work together to rebuild.”

Randy Shoemaker, co-owner of Lavallette Hardware, pledged to be ready for residents and visitors eager to vacation over the summer despite the damage caused by Hurricane Sandy.

“We took on roughly 30 inches of water and lost about \$175,000 in merchandise,” said Shoemaker. “I want our residents and tourists to know that summer will still be here and to come down and get your houses ready to live in and get ready for the summertime.”

David Morin of Federico’s said that Hurricane Sandy brought a tremendous outpouring of help and concern among Belmar residents and local officials.

“Volunteers from everywhere were in Belmar. It was just unbelievable. There were five hundred at St. Rose High School that came out to help move things from the school, which had nearly eight feet of water in the classrooms,” said Morin. “This town just pulled together. The fire department, the police department, the borough, they’re all a team. They’re just good people. We’ve been here seventeen years and I wouldn’t be anyplace but Belmar.”

Ship Bottom Ron Jon Surf Shop manager Patty Gawronski believes it’s important to support local businesses in areas hardest hit by Sandy.

“We’re open so just come and support the local businesses. In fact, there are quite a few businesses that are open right now and every two weeks we receive a local newsletter listing even more businesses that are reopening,” said Gawronski. “ I feel very positive, not just about the shop, but about Long Beach Island overall because I see people working very hard on their homes and businesses that so people can come back to enjoy our beaches, restaurants, businesses and shore homes.”

In the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, Governor Christie has made assisting affected New Jersey small businesses a priority. In addition to initiating a statewide business impact assessment in collaboration with the state’s leading business groups, the Christie Administration worked with the Small Business Administration to secure nearly \$189 million in loans for thousands of homes and small businesses, and provided lines of credit through the state’s Economic Development Authority for businesses awaiting insurance reimbursement, grants for job training, and benefits for displaced workers. New Jersey was also the recipient of a \$15.6 million National Emergency Grant from the U.S. Department of Labor to hire unemployed state residents to assist with clean-up and recovery efforts.

Businesses are encouraged to call the state’s Business Action Center at 1-866-534-7789 for assistance and information on the many business advocacy services available through the state. Information is also available by visiting the state’s business portal at www.newjerseybusiness.gov.

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