

## **Storm fouls area; Emergency lifted**

**By Francesca Olsen**

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On Monday morning, as of 8 a.m., Claverack Supervisor James Keegan lifted the State of Emergency he had declared on Friday evening due to a series of violent thunderstorms that ripped their way through the county, choosing Claverack as a nucleus of damage.

Countywide, reports of downed power lines, flooded basements, closed roads and lightning strikes abounded. According to the National Grid web site, 4,031 households were without power in the county, with power expected to be restored by midnight Saturday.

National Grid reported as of Monday afternoon that only three households in the county were without power, which would be restored around 3:15 p.m.

"Most of Claverack for power back at a quarter to six on Saturday night," said Keegan.

On Routes 23 and 23B in Claverack, the scene on Saturday morning matched the state of emergency, with debris everywhere and road crews directing traffic around the obstructions.

When asked what the damage estimate was for Claverack, Keegan said, "I don't know yet. We're still making an assessment. We're still working on the roads."

Road crews are still working on clearing debris and downed trees, but all roads have been re-opened. "Nothing's closed. Everything is open, but I know they're still working on Brookbound Lane, Apple Lane, and 9H south," Keegan said.

National Grid sent a management representative to the Claverack Fire House. "We corresponded with him and another representative the next day," Keegan said.

Work crews were sent down from Cobleskill, Gloversville, Glens Falls, Albany and Troy to assist with cleanup efforts. Much of the debris has just been pushed back far enough from the road to get roadways passable again.

"We're going to give the people a chance to get their houses in order and get their debris on the roadside. It'll probably be a month before we get everything done," Keegan said.

On Friday evening, Keegan was unable to leave his neighborhood at first because of strong downdraft blowing debris up the street. "I couldn't see," he said. "I couldn't get to the firehouse, even, to answer a call. It blew for five to eight minutes."

On Stone Mill Road, Keegan reported seeing a strip of about ten rows of corn completely flattened; corn outside the strip was untouched.

National Weather Service Meteorologist Kimberly Sutkevich said this kind of phenomenon is not because of a tornado, but indicative of straight line winds from a downburst.

Thunderstorms continue building because of updrafts and downdrafts. When there is a downdraft, Sutkevich said, it can produce a downburst, "a concentrated area of winds going in one direction, so there's no rotation associated with it."

The National Weather Service did not receive any reports of tornado damage in Columbia County.

Keegan said the town is still evaluating the cost of damage from Friday's storms. "We've got to apply separately for this one. I have to contact Bill Black (Columbia County's Emergency Management Director) to see what we're doing as far as filing to get the SEMO and FEMA money."

"We got it in December, and we got it in July. This is more localized. It's going to tax the town budget."

Black told the Register-Star on Saturday that the county would try to amend the damage totals from July's violent storms to include damage to Claverack that occurred Aug. 21.

Keegan urges people to proceed with caution on roadways because quite a few Verizon trucks and private tree companies are working on secondary roads.

The National Weather Service reported rainfall counts for Friday of 2.36 inches in Ghent, 2.0 inches in central Chatham, 1.87 inches in Livingston, 1.43 inches in Kinderhook, .96 inches in North Chatham, .84 inches in Taghkanic, and .62 inches in Ancramdale.



A worker drags tree branches to a waiting truck outside the heavily damaged Randall home on Route 23B in Claverack Monday. The house was one of many struck by falling trees and damaged in the Claverack area during Friday's intense storms.

*(Robert Ragaini/Hudson-Catskill Newspapers)*



A workmen with Filli's Tree Service removes debris from the front lawn of a home On Brookbound Lane in Claverack Monday morning as the massive clean-up effort from Friday's intense storms continues.  
*(Robert Ragaini/Hudson-Catskill Newspapers)*



New York state Department of Transportation crews clean up tree branches along the shoulder of Route 9H/23 just south of the Claverack light Monday morning. Massive clean up efforts, resulting from Friday's intense storms, continued throughout the Claverack area which was the area worst hit by high winds stirred up by the thunderstorms.  
*(Robert Ragaini/Hudson-Catskill Newspapers)*