Lodi, NJ

Hurricane Floyd Puts Cleared Land Under 6 Feet of Water





Soccer and baseball fields at Lodi's Voto Tedesco Park. The park is dedicated to two Lodi police officers who lost their lives in the line of duty

The Saddle River divides the Borough of Lodi; four bridges connect the two halves. In 1977, a severe storm flooded homes and the Borough's sewage pumping plant in the riverfront area west of Main Street. The plant, built above the 100-year base flood elevation, was unaffected by the 1977 flooding. But homes in the area were badly flooded.

After the 1977 event, Lodi became one of the earliest communities to participate in a buyout program using federal funds. In 1982, under Section 1362 of the National Flood Insurance Program, the Federal Emergency Management Agency purchased six flood damaged homes. The Borough of Lodi paid the cost of demolition. Ten additional homes were purchased and demolished using a federal matching grant available under the provisions of the Emergency Flood Control Bond Act of 1978. One homeowner in the target area reportedly refused to participate in the buyout.

The land cleared in the 1982 buyout was set aside for recreation. The site was improved with a softball/soccer field, and elevated toilet facilities. Chain link fencing and lights were added. The well-used park was dedicated to two Lodi policemen, Voto and Tedesco, who died in the line of duty. The soccer program is so popular, the Borough wants to build another soccer field.

On September 16, 1999, Hurricane Floyd caused the Saddle River to overtop its banks with a vengeance. Floodwaters reached from Avenue E to Central Avenue on Main Street. All four bridges were under water and impassable. Voto Tedesco Park lay under six feet of water. Lodi's Sewage Pumping Station, built for a 100-year flood, had four feet of water and was off line for three days. Water and sewage flowed into houses nearest to the pumping station and river. Voto Tedesco Park facilities, although submerged, survived the flooding. The sixteen families who formerly lived on the site had made the smartest move of their lives.



The single target house that wasn't bought out in 1982 suffered over three feet of water in the first floor.



Lodi's sewage pumping station, built to the 100-year BFE, was flooded by Floyd