

## A Rainy Day Gone Wrong

Rivers of rain poured down endlessly. The constant pitter-pattering on the millions of windows in metro Atlanta had the residents worried, and rightly so. The continuous rainfall from September 15-22, 2009 left the active and bustling city 10-20 inches deep in muddy water.

While floods or extreme amounts of rainfall are not common in this area, they can be devastating anywhere, especially in a highly populated city that is not properly prepared for natural disasters. The estimated damage cost was \$500 million, a price well over the damage many tornadoes have caused. While some may find tornadoes to be more frightening than floods, both are equally capable of mass destruction. In addition, all major interstates and many roads leading in, out, and around metro Atlanta were closed, leaving people in the city stranded wherever they were. Eight individuals died attempting to drive on the streets that had become an ocean.

During the height of the flooding, new records for the city were set. Many locations reported water heights at over 20 feet higher than what is considered 'flood stage.' Twenty river gauges in metro Atlanta were forced underwater by the rushing waters and stopped functioning. In total, this flood managed to set 28 new terrifying records.

Suffering as much if not more than the city around them, businesses struggled as a result of the damage to their warehouses and office buildings. Furthermore, many

were not able to transport products to their buyers because most roads were closed off. Farms lost an entire year's worth of crops, which in turn led to less fresh produce in the weeks and months following the event.

According to what my parents have told me, the flood did not show any sign of weakness. Their entire backyard was submerged in at least a foot deep of water. At the time, they were raising chickens. My mom says, "We had to move the chickens into their coop, which was on an elevated part of the landscape and closer to the house." The fence separating their backyard from another house was damaged by the constant thudding of water against it. They used sandbags to desperately try to keep the water out of the house. For a few days, they could not go to work or the grocery store, due to the flooded roads.

In total, seventeen counties, mainly in the metro Atlanta area, received federal aid in the clean-up process. Rebuilding continued for over a year, even after the flood had been long gone. Improvements in weather forecasting tools and data now gives hydrologists and meteorologists a better view of when the next natural disaster may transpire.

By experiencing tragedy, we are able to rebuild with more resilience and strength. These situations are what often bring communities together. Metro Atlanta would not be what it is today without all of the hardships that have shaped it.

