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Flood Control: A Piece of Mind for Some New Jersey Residents

On October 29, 2012, Hurricane Sandy swept across the New Jersey coast causing catastrophic surges and extreme damage to homes and businesses. Residents were preparing for the worst and the citizens of the Borough of Roselle feared severe flooding. The major flood control project was under construction and many hoped it would keep much of the flooding at bay. The current stage of construction helped hold back the flooding during Sandy.

The year prior, Hurricane Irene brought more than eight and a half inches of rainfall that brought extreme flooding. Some residents had eight to ten feet of water in their homes.

Residents in Roselle have had their share of flooding. Even before Hurricane Irene, structures along Morses Creek, which passes through the borough, would be inundated with flooding after every major rain event.

After many years, a major storm water channel revitalization project was developed to lessen the problem. Many officials came together to form a committee to oversee the project's success. Roselle Councilwoman Christine Dansereau became a member of the borough's council in order to ensure something was done about the major flooding in her neighborhood.

"At first I thought it was just our neighborhood, and then I realized that there were more than 400 people who were directly impacted," she said. "Then, I began to realize that our fire department, our police department, and our ambulance service were also affected. The burden was on the entire town!"

Protecting 2.2 square miles of low-lying land, the \$12 million project Union County designed is partially funded with a \$5 million grant from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. The project consists of widening and deepening West Brook, enlarging and updating some culverts, installing siphons for the sanitary sewer system, replacing the sanitary sewer pipes, and



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The final phase of the project is set for completion in November 2015. The stream is being stabilized with rock lined walls in some areas. In other areas, the natural channel will be modified and vegetation will be planted.

Roselle Borough Engineer Carl O'Brien has been overseeing the final phase of the project. In conjunction with other borough officials, he has been involved in public awareness initiatives to make sure everyone who is affected is informed of the changes. Though the rain Sandy produced did not fully test the project, borough officials are confident it will correct the major flooding issues once it is completed. Overall, O'Brien feels the project will affect more than just those residing along the creek. "I'm optimistic that it will work for the entire town," he said.