

## Irene-damage mobile homes razed in Berlin

BERLIN — Pete Ainsworth snapped photos Monday of the excavator chomping through the roof of his neighbor's trailer. Ainsworth's mobile home, which had also been flooded by Tropical Storm Irene, was next on the chopping block.

"We tried to save what we could, some of the stuff that was hanging on the walls," Ainsworth, 35, said. "But pretty much everything was no good."

Lt. Gov. Phil Scott, standing in front of the wreckage at Weston's Mobile Home Park in Berlin, implored Vermonters to continue to help the people who lost their homes in the storm two months ago. A task force, organized by Scott and Secretary of Commerce and Community Development Lawrence Miller, has raised more than \$150,000 to demolish uninhabitable mobile homes for their owners across the state. However, the group says it still needs another \$150,000 to carry out its campaign.

The owners of 20 mobile homes at the trailer park in Berlin released their homes to the task force for demolition. Scott said the group initially figured each trailer would cost about \$1,500 to destroy. However, workers uncovered asbestos in the floors of five of the trailers, putting the cost to

destroy those homes at roughly \$4,000 apiece, he said.

Scott said he hoped to have the 20 trailers razed and removed within two weeks, before moving on to trailer parks in Duxbury and Woodstock.

The Vermont Long Term Disaster Recovery Group, an organization founded in the spring to provide aid to victims of natural disasters, has been administering the aid. The organization was designed to provide assistance beyond what insurance companies and the Federal Emergency Management Agency dole out.

"FEMA does not meet the need and can't meet the need," said Chris Graff, a member of the recovery group. The need can be met only "through a lot of giving," he said.

Ainsworth, who lived with his wife in the trailer for about two years, said although the couple lacked flood insurance, they had been compensated by FEMA. He declined

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to disclose the amount of money they received.

“They were fair,” he said.

Ainsworth spent the night of the storm trying to get out of Middlesex, where he runs A-1 Graphics. His wife, Mary Jane Ainsworth, a 31-year old Department of Corrections employee, grabbed their cat and fled their home as the water rose outside. The Ainsworths have since moved in with Mary Jane Ainsworth’s family in Montpelier.

Pete Ainsworth said he returned home the following morning, and found that the floodwaters had risen more than three feet inside the trailer.

“At first it was like, it happened and we were just trying to get everything settled,” Ainsworth said. “Then reality sets in, and it’s like, we don’t have a place anymore.”

Contact Matt Ryan at 651-4849 or [mryan@burlingtonfreepress.com](mailto:mryan@burlingtonfreepress.com). Follow Matt on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/matryanhere](http://www.twitter.com/matryanhere).

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