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Princeton Community Television and Former NJN News Anchor Jim Hooker bring three hours of programming focusing on Life After Sandy

No one in New Jersey needs to be reminded that in October it will be two years since Hurricane Sandy swept across the Garden State leaving behind tens of billions of dollars in property damage, businesses destroyed and thousands left homeless. Progress has been made, yet two years later work related to clean-up, rebuilding and relocation remains.

Princeton Community Television has produced a block of compelling programming –three hours of content——hosted by Jim Hooker, veteran journalist and former senior anchor and managing editor of NJN News on NJN Public Television, and produced by Janice Selinger, the former Acting Executive Director of NJN Public Television and 14-time Emmy award-winning producer.

This Special Broadcast will be seen on Princeton Community TV throughout Labor Day, Monday Sept. 1, 2014. Princeton Community TV broadcasts on cable television on Comcast CH 30 (Princeton), Verizon FiOS CH 45 (Greater Princeton Area), Streamed online at www.princetontv.org and on its Roku Channel.

The special broadcast will also be carried on METV in Metuchen, NJ; OPTV in Bergen County, NJ and Montclair TV34.

In addition the programs are being offered to the 60 Public Access stations in New Jersey to air on Labor Day or at another point prior to the two -year anniversary of Hurricane Sandy that fits a station's schedule.

“This very strong block of programming presents an inside look at post-Sandy New Jersey from a number of important viewpoints,” Hooker said. “A taped segment features interviews and compelling video from the front lines of one community hit hard by the storm – Highlands. Roundtable discussions with journalist and artists as well as key figures from the non-profit world, the medical profession and government agencies also shed light on important information that we can all learn from.”

Producer Selinger says her aim with the programming was to not only look back, but also to look ahead with an eye toward rebuilding safely and being prepared for the next storm.

“As we come up on the second anniversary of that devastating storm, I thought it was important to step back and take a look at how far we've come, where we've still got to go as a state and also how New Jerseyans can better protect themselves in the rebuilding and before another such storm strikes,” says Selinger, the brainchild behind the project.

Princeton Community Television, where the roundtables and feature program were produced, is taking the lead in the project among Public Access stations because of the importance of the issue, says George McCollough, general manager for Princeton Community Television.

“Sandy was a statewide event that devastated communities along the coast as well as far inland in many counties around New Jersey,” McCollough said. “As terrible as it was – and, yes, many families are still rebuilding almost two years later – what better way than through Public Access television to communicate with our fellow New Jerseyans about where we are today and what we’re doing to move forward.”

The programs, produced under the title, *Life After Sandy*, include a half-hour documentary and three studio discussions with video components. We meet some Sandy storytellers who have a personal approach and reason for documenting the storm and its aftermath. In another segment, the programming explores the importance of rebuilding safely to avoid a second disaster while meeting some New Jerseyans who have rebuilt and reopened their businesses while others still strive to get back home. The programs also include a discussion of resiliency and lessons learned so New Jerseyans can better prepare themselves for future storms.

The first hour -long program in this series is called *Telling Sandy’s Stories* which features the work of three talented Jersey Shore natives who set out to document in their own individual way the tragedy as well as the fragile recovery that’s still ongoing. Jim Hooker interviews the panelists which include Sandy Levine, a freelance television producer and Toms River native who produced a documentary on the Superstorm called *Heartbreak and Healing After Sandy*; Justin Auciello, a native of South Seaside Park and an urban planner who started *Jersey Shore Hurricane News*, a Facebook page that has more than 225,000 Likes and Kevin Burkitt, a Manasquan native whose haunting black and white still photography project *Hurricane Sandy: 91 Days/Countless Nights* captured life post Sandy after dark.

After Sandy: Rebuilding Safely looks at the importance of avoiding a second disaster as people clean-up and rebuild after a Hurricane. Jim Hooker speaks with Dr. Winston Kwa, Medical Director for the Hudson Valley Clinical Centers of the Selikoff Centers for Occupational Health about occupational health and injuries following natural disasters; Gerry Bonney, Community Disaster Education Specialist from FEMA and Janice Selinger, Communications Coordinator of the Safer After Sandy project of the New Jersey Work Environment Council who discuss mold and the importance of training and proper use of ladders, scaffolding and generators.

Selinger worked with Former NJN News Cameraman Frank Foley spending a day in Highlands, New Jersey to produce *A Place to Call Home*, the documentary portion of *Life After Sandy*, narrated by Jim Hooker. Some of the people they speak with include Leo Cervantes, owner of *Chilango’s Mexican Restaurant* in Highlands. Cervantes’ restaurant was destroyed but he took food from his kitchen and cooked for people in the shelter after the storm and then rebuilt his business better than ever. Giesela Smith, owner of *The Bay Area Bakery and Café*, talks about focusing on getting her bakery up and running prior to turning her attention to her home. Smith has been living with a sister for the past two years, a situation that Donna Blaze, CEO of the

Affordable Housing Alliance, says is quite common. Donna has placed Sandy survivors like Olivia DeCellio not yet back in their homes in some pre-fab housing units and has a new program that may get some homeowners the raised structures they need to move back home. A Place to Call Home also shows the work of the Manasquan Organization of Volunteer Efforts or MOVE that is continuing to help those displaced by Sandy with counseling and household items. Marie Maiorino, who has hired a contractor and the work was not done to code, says she has to start over.

“I want to come home. I want to bring my dog home I want to live here I love this town you can’t beat the location until the water goes through ya...I want to come home ... that ’s it”

The program also shows viewers the street corner training conducted by New Labor, an organization that works with low wage mostly Latino workers who are waiting to be picked up for a day’s work as well as the Safer After Sandy Public Service announcements that focus on mold, generator and ladder safety.

The final portion of Life After Sandy is Resiliency: Lessons Learned where Jim Hooker speaks with Mathieu Nelessen, North Jersey Regional CEO of the American Red Cross, Cathy McCann, Chair of the New Jersey Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster and Chief Operating Officer of the Community Food Bank of New Jersey and Keith Adams, Disaster Recovery Coordinator for the Episcopal Dioceses of New Jersey and Newark. They discuss how all disasters start local and end local and what can be done to prepare for the next storm that is bound to come.

Life After Sandy is a look at New Jersey after Sandy and what can learned for future storms

Princeton Community TV is a Princeton, New Jersey based Digital Media Center and Public Access Channel. Its mission is to provide the public with the tools, training and means to produce their programming.