'Not today, Flo': Realtors livestream, struggle to find power as Hurricane Florence makes landfall

After several days of worry and hurried preparation, Hurricane Florence has begun its assault on the North Carolina coast, leaving many real estate professionals without power and scrambling for cover.

The storm, which made landfall at around 7:15 a.m. Friday, brought heavy rain and winds of 90 miles an hour to parts of North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia. North Carolina was by far the hardest hit by the storm — in New Bern, over 250 people were rescued from water-marooned homes and hotels while around 150 more remained stranded in other parts of the city.

Even though the storm was downgraded from a Category 4 to a Category 1 Hurricane, it still did damage — in North Carolina, over 400,000 people were temporarily left without power.

“Power is out and generator kicked on for the house and barn,” Amethyst Albert, a Keller Williams broker in Fayetteville, North Carolina, wrote on her Facebook page. “However, don’t have Wi-Fi or cell booster due to being rural. So virtually no phone service.”

The storm winds were so strong that a part of Albert’s chimney was blown off the roof and into the bushes.

“Not today Flo,” Albert wrote.

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Posted by Amethyst Albert on Thursday, September 13, 2018

Across the state, more than 4,500 people have had to check into shelters under both mandatory evacuation orders and their own initiative. To help people who have had to suddenly leave their homes, over 300 Airbnb hosts have opened up their homes for free in Tennessee, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia as part of the organization's disaster response program.

Janet Loper, a Realtor at NextGen Real Estate, has been livestreaming footage of the storm from her family brokerage's two beachfront locations in South Carolina — in them, you can see strong waves and palm trees that rock under the heavy winds.

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Posted by Janet Loper on Thursday, September 13, 2018

As usual, the storm — and the different states' response to it — brought out some political disagreement. Many pointed out that Conservative state Rep. Pat McElraft, whose top campaign contributors had been the North Carolina Association of Realtors and the North Carolina Home Builders' Association, once drafted a bill rejecting the research of a panel of scientists who tried to warn lawmakers of rising sea water levels along the coast, Wired reports.

Others praised their real estate brokerages for their concern about employees caught in the eye of the storm.

'"Never in my 24 years in real estate, have I heard the top leader in the company call, to verify my safety and extend to me and my family help in the midst of a disaster," Tony McGee, a Realtor at eXp Realty, in a Facebook post.

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Amazing! I have been serving the Virginia Peninsula area as a real estate agent for 24 years. I was with an awesome…

Posted by Tony McGee on Wednesday, September 12, 2018

As Hurricane Florence's winds pass North Carolina to head southwest and northward, the true

extent of the damage is still not clear. A pre-storm Zillow report found that over $1 trillion worth of real estate property is at risk of being damaged.

“Hurricane Florence is taking aim at our coast and we are all preparing for the massive amount of water coming,” Dee Langley, a Coldwell Banker Realtor who has been helping people in her area reach shelters and emergency services, wrote in a Facebook post.

And yet, some real estate professionals are hopeful that their region has seen the worst of the storm — and that soon the daily real estate grind can soon begin anew. Richard Hess, vice president and general sales manager of Sun Realty vacation rental property management company in North Carolina, has spent the last few days before the storm rushing to board up windows, put up storm shutters and get in touch with guests.

“I expect we’ll be back in the full swing of things tomorrow,” Richard Hess, vice president and general sales manager of the largest vacation rental property management company in the part hit by the storm, told Inman.

Email Veronika Bondarenko

Source: click here