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## N.J. residents split on whether to rebuild or tear down, poll says

Posted on April 24, 2013 by John Schoonejongen

Rebuild or tear down and turn into open space?

On the question of whether federal dollars should go to help rebuild New Jersey residents' homes destroyed by superstorm Sandy or go to turning that area into open space, the state is evenly divided, according to a new poll.

In the Rutgers-Eagleton poll, 43 percent said homeowners should get \$10,000 to rebuild as long as they stayed in their residences for two years, and 43 percent said federal money should be used to buy the property and turn it into open space. Another 14 percent said they did not know.

The poll, however, did show a difference of opinion based on age and location, said David Redlawsk, director of the Rutgers-Eagleton poll.

"Jersey Shore residents are just as evenly split as most of the state on the best way to use these Sandy relief funds," Redlawsk said. "But those living in the northwest exurban counties do have a preference: there 56 percent prefer buying damaged properties and tearing them down. Garden Staters under 30 strongly support rebuilding, while middle-aged and older residents strongly support buyouts."

A companion poll asking the same questions of New York residents was conducted by Siena College's Siena Research Institute. In that poll, there was a uniform plurality in favor of helping residents rebuild.

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#### About John Schoonejongen

John Schoonejongen is state editor for Gannett New Jersey newspapers. He has reported and edited at New Jersey newspapers from Salem County to Passaic County, writing about everything from state politics to lost pigs on the Delaware Memorial Bridge. Born in Camden County, he still speaks with a southern New Jersey accent, much to his wife's annoyance.

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