

Sandy's victims least upbeat about recovery, poll says

By Jacqueline L. Urgo, Inquirer Staff Writer



Workers from EarthTech of Ocean View, N.J., drive foundations at a homesite in Ocean City, N.J. Post-Sandy construction guidelines suggest pilings instead of blocks, even in flood zones that are not subject to the direct wave impact of a velocity zone. (TOM GRALISH / Staff Photographer)

[GALLERY: Workers from EarthTech of Ocean View, N.J., drive foundations... \(TOM GRALISH...\)](#)

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Not surprisingly, those most affected by Hurricane Sandy are the least optimistic about the Shore's recovery from the storm among New Jersey residents, according to a new Rutgers-Eagleton Poll being released Wednesday.



And apparently nobody has been more buoyed by the effort than Gov. Christie.

Garden State residents gave a less positive ranking of the recovery when compared with Christie's Memorial Day weekend grading of conditions along the coast as an 8 on a scale of 10, the poll said.

Residents gave the Shore recovery a 6.4 out of 10 - a slightly lower ranking than they gave the rest of the state for recovery, at 7, according to the statewide poll of 888 adults conducted from June 3 to 9.

"New Jerseyans overall lean toward the optimistic end of the scale on Sandy recovery," said David Redlawsk, director of the poll and professor of political science at Rutgers University.

"And those who visited the Shore during Memorial Day weekend appear to have had this positive perception reinforced, despite the bad weather during part of the weekend," Redlawsk said.

Democrats last month objected to the Republican Christie appearing with his family in publicly funded television commercials - saying the governor was benefiting from the publicity while running for reelection - that kicked off a \$25 million state tourism campaign heralding the start of the summer season with the catchy "Stronger Than the Storm" theme.

Democrats introduced a bill in the Assembly to prohibit the governor or lieutenant governor from appearing in any state or federally funded ads in an election year.

Rutgers-Eagleton said the "Stronger Than the Storm" ads have been seen by seven in 10 residents, but the commercials only somewhat influence their perceptions about conditions at the Shore. But those who saw the ad said they were more than twice as likely to have visited the Shore on Memorial Day weekend than those who did not see it, according to the poll.

It said simply seeing the ad did not improve perceptions about the recovery - actually visiting did, with 15 percent of those who went giving higher-than-average ratings of 6.6 than those who did not at 6.3. Those who went to the beach are 10 points more likely to rate the recovery at 7 or above, according to poll officials.

Christie's so-called "bromance" with President Obama displayed during two presidential visits to the Shore - one days before the November election in which Obama was reelected and the other just as the tourism season began - apparently helped increase the governor's profile with voters.

Forty-six percent of those polled said the governor's bipartisan relationship with Obama would help his chances if he runs for president in 2016; only 10 percent said it would hurt. And 44 percent indicated that it makes no difference to them if the men get along, according to poll results.

While the statewide average recovery rating for the Shore is 6.4, there are regional differences. The most battered parts of New Jersey delivered the least positive results, with Shore county residents rating recovery at 6.2 and suburban residents elsewhere weighing in with a 6.6 average score, the poll said.

The average Shore recovery rating for those personally affected by Sandy was at 6.3.

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