**PAESTA Podcast Series - You Asked, We Answered!**

**Episode 37 - How Did Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee impact Pennsylvania in 2011?**

Hello, my name is Andrew Leake, and I’m going to ask you to do something for me. I want you to close your eyes as I take you five years into the past: the year 2011. Media paranoia ensues as a massive storm makes its way up the east coast of the United States like a lion stalking its prey, preparing to pounce. Your family is in a panic as this storm closes the gap to get to you ever so slowly, and precautions are being done to brace for the coming assault. Your home is now a bunker, and outside is unsafe. The storm has arrived, and its power is something no one could have prepared for. Winds strong enough to uproot trees have a never-ending reign, and raindrops hurl towards the planet’s surface like billions of miniature missiles launched a few million at a time. The battle cries of thunder and the explosions of lightning ensure this storm has no sympathy for life.

Suddenly, you hear another battle cry, one that is not familiar to you. Media coverage unveils that this is a new titanic storm of equal power to the one that was already present. The east coast has been turned into a massive cloud on the map, and a living torture towards the surface. Floods, outages, and devastation commence at an even more alarming pace.

After hours of torment and torture, you finally hear the end of the onslaught. You walk out of your house and see the carnage that was left over. Branches, water, and trash litter the streets and sidewalks. Trees are destroyed, power has gone out, and basements are flooded.

Now, open your eyes. This visualization was the reality that people faced in 2011. You may now be thinking “What kind of storms rampaged through the east coast?” “Was that much damage actually done?” The answer is simple; the titanic storms were known as Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee.

Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee had hit numerous states on the east coast, mainly Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Virginia, West Virginia, and even Washington, D.C. [1] In terms of Pennsylvania, Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee were the first major storms to hit the state in twenty-two years, with the last one being Hurricane Floyd in 1999. [2] As the storms hit the Eastern seaboard, winds had reached speeds of 115 miles per hour; rainfall had accumulated up to two feet high with severe flooding, and massive power outages left a couple million customers without power. [3] In Pennsylvania, 700,00-850,000 customers of FirstEnergy corporations, such as PECO, were without power, and three people died during this time. [4] As if the power outages and flood were not enough, all forms of public transit, such as buses and trains, were shut down for days until the flooding stopped. [5] Everything was shut down and destroyed by Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee.

Since the devastation of these two storms, places have taken precautions to combat future damage from equally powerful storms. Houses in West Pittston, Pennsylvania have actually been remodeled so they are supported on beams to prevent any water from the streets getting into the rooms. [6] The streets in this area gather too much water, and flooding becomes common there, so this support does help these families to not worry about property damage. In addition, a new form of grid has been developed to detect power outages and supply a limited source of power to the area until it can be fixed. [7] This development will alleviate the pressure of not having any power to use. With these advancements in specific being the most popular and effective as of right now, damages from any storm can be prevented, as a new gateway for even better technology in this field can be developed.

In summation, due to Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee, these innovations became a high priority to develop and create for the safety and insurance of citizens. As horrible as it is to say, Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee left a dangerous impression, and yet a needed impact on Pennsylvania and the country as a whole.

I charge you now to take this content into your future. Who knows? Maybe you will be the next person to prevent the next Hurricane Irene. That’s all for now; I’m Andrew Leake, and I thank you for listening to me today, and I hope you have a great rest of your day. Have a good one!

Works Cited

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