

# AREA'S NEXT HURRICANE MAY BRING AN EARLIER CURFEW

**Tallahassee Democrat – December 3 1985**  
**Written By Bill Cotterell**

Civil-defense director Bunky Atkinson said Monday night she will call for a curfew “in a heartbeat” the next time a major hurricane threatens Leon County.

“I wish we’d have recommended a curfew on the day of the storm,” she said in a televised post-mortem with other state and local officials who assessed Hurricane Kate’s onslaught. “Who would have anticipated total power loss – no lights, no electricity and people running all over town like the Indianapolis 500?”

Gordon Guthrie, director of the state Division of Emergency Management, said he will ask Gov. Bob Graham to include a \$1-million appropriation in his 1986-87 budget for a statewide disaster-communications network. Noting that parts of the Panhandle were cut off from all communication at the height of the storm last month, Guthrie said the Department of Community Affairs wanted a special radio link to all 67 counties.

“We think it’s absolutely essential that we get it,” he said.

Tallahassee Assistant City Manager Joe Dykes and Talquin Electric Co-op Manager George Galloway said Kate’s combined financial impact on local utilities will be more than \$3 million, but that neither the city utility nor Talquin Electric currently anticipates a rate increase to pay for the damage. Dykes said the city utilities division has a \$900,000 working reserve and that the rest of the estimated \$2.2 million restoration cost can be made up from contingency funds.

Galloway said Talquin had “in excess of \$1 million” damage. He said he thought the co-op could arrange long-term financing to pay for the rebuilding job, rather than hiking rates.

Dykes also said that, despite the recommendations of some conservationists who worried that trees may be torn down to protect power lines, it is economically infeasible to convert to underground electricity routes. Dykes said that for about 20 years, the city has offered the option of underground connections to major apartment developments and housing projects, but that underground rewiring throughout the city would cost too much.

The four officials discussed Kate in a special live broadcast by WTXL-TV, Channel 27.

Atkinson said the 7:00PM to 7:00AM curfew November 23 helped make it safer for utility crews to clear tree-strewn streets. She said she wished she had asked city and county commissioners a day earlier to clamp a curfew on the area.

“We had people out in the middle of the storm, driving around and looking at it,” she said. “Of the 20 arrests we had, only two were for the curfew. The rest were for trespassing, or being in their cups too much, or things like that.”

She said there were at least two serious traffic accidents the Thursday night the storm hit, but none on Friday night, when the curfew was in effect.