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Six Years After Hurricane Sandy, Experts Say N.J. Beaches are Better Than Ever

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ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. - About six years ago, Hurricane Sandy made landfall just north of Brigantine.

After years of rebuilding New Jersey's beaches, some may say they are looking better than ever and experts said New Jersey is in a very good position for the summer tourist season, but more importantly, hurricane season.

On Wednesday, June 27th, experts from The Coastal Research Center at Stockton University, The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJ DEP), and the United States Army Corps of Engineers, came together to discuss the most recent changes occurring on New Jersey's beaches.

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Over a billion dollars worth of construction has been going on since Hurricane Sandy, and experts said it's been a success.

"I'm happy to report at this time that these policies and strategy that we have employed and worked together with, there are healthy beautiful beaches in New Jersey and that vital infrastructure is being protected as well as the beaches are open and ready for all," said Keith Watson, with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

"We've seen some tremendous growth on our beaches especially at the south Jetty where the beaches have grown a lot, but also around 15th Street where we have the Brigantine Hotel," said Brigantine Councilman Vince Sera. "Since we've been doing these beach replenishment projects, the beach is actually probably three or four times bigger than it was originally and we've had a lot of success."

More than 40 million cubic feet of sand has been used to restore New Jersey beaches after Hurricane Sandy. That's enough sand to fill Lincoln Financial Field about eight times.

Despite the positive reports from officials, some community members are not adjusting well to the changes, with some specifically complaining about the large protective dunes in Margate.

"Anything that's different is subject to criticism regardless of what happens," said executive director of the Coastal Research Center at Stockton University, Dr. Stewart Farrell.

"Now, yes, the dune is higher, and yes you do have to hike over it and there is a pathway at each street end. So, basically yes, you can either hike over it or don't. It's an option they can take."

The changes made to New Jersey's beaches will ultimately save a lot of communities from future storms.

"We will have another Sandy and it may be more of an impact in South Jersey than Sandy was," said David Rosenblatt, assistant commissioner for construction and engineering, with the NJ DEP. "The proof will come that this is a good thing for the area."

Since Hurricane Sandy, beach projects have been happening nonstop and will continue with the persistent funding and efforts at state and federal levels.

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