

# Three months later... Villas West, East deal with hail storm damage

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The unit is nearly 60 years old, but you wouldn't know it from the way Leslie Doyle talks about her home at Villas West.

"It is brand new," she said. "I have a brand-new roof with a long-term warranty, a new HVAC system, a new thermostat, new insulation, upgraded everything."

But she got it the hard way, and she's not alone.

Doyle's home was hit by a violent hail storm July 16 that took out hundreds of trees, skylights, and windows across Green Valley.

And if that wasn't bad enough, the remnants of Hurricane Kay coming through shortly after Labor Day added to the misery.

Now, more than three months after the July storm, there are still dozens of units awaiting renovation and some residents are living with tarps over their heads and water damage, waiting their turn.

Doyle was home the night of the storm and quick action saved her new flooring.

Her roof was later removed during repairs. That's when the roof "coating machine" broke, leaving her home exposed.

"When the remnants of the hurricane came through there was no protection," she said. In came the water, again.

The good news is that it's covered by HOA insurance.

Her next-door neighbor was hit too, and Doyle has twice mucked out their home for them because they're not back in town yet.

Doyle said the flat membrane roofs in the past were considered “to be the Cadillac of roofs. Now the ferocity of these storms has proven that they’re going to have to come up with another plan for roofs in here. I mean, skylights broke, I have friends who had golf ball (sized) hail coming straight into their living room.”

Doyle, who has lived in the unit for a year and has been coming to Green Valley for many years, said, “I’ve never seen storms like the last two years.”

### **A look at numbers**

Villas West, one of the first condo complexes to go up in Green Valley back in the 1960s, has 672 units housed in 180 residential buildings. Most buildings have four homes.

General Manager Dorothy Gates said 117 of the 180 buildings had hail damage from the July 16 storm. She said 224 units reported interior damage, mostly water leaks caused by the hail.

If a unit had water leaks not associated with a hail-damaged roof, the homeowner’s private insurance will deal with it. She said that amounts to about two buildings, or a handful of units.

Total damage covered by insurance is nearing \$6 million, Gates said.

She said they have two restoration companies working on the damage and that as of Thursday, they had re-foamed 11 roofs and replaced 27.

“We have several units that have been completely restored,” she said.

It’s mostly a waiting game now, down to scheduling. The mitigation is done but that hasn’t made life easier for a lot of people who simply have to wait their turn in a market that is as short on workers as it is supplies to get the job done.

“We have some people who are sitting there with no ceiling, they just have plastic up there waiting for a new roof so we can rebuild their unit,” Gates said. “That’s the hardest part for our homeowners. Then we have some with new roofs, but they haven’t got restoration (inside) yet.”

While most residents have to move out during restoration, Gates said it appears just two units were uninhabitable after the storm after the roofs fell in.

Contractors are shooting to have all roofs replaced in February, but there is no estimate on interior work, Gates said, pointing to the unpredictability of getting materials and waiting on cabinets to come in. In some units, entire kitchens have to be replaced.

Gates said there has been no discussion about a special assessment for homeowners, and while there is a chance dues will go up, nothing has been approved by the board yet.

### **Keep them informed**

Gates said Villas West has had a microburst in the past that took out one building, and plenty of downed trees have damaged homes over the years. But nothing like this.

“As you can imagine, everybody is frustrated,” she said. “They have a leak; their ceiling is torn down. But about 95% of our homeowners and tenants have been wonderful. They understand, they’re very supportive. We do have a few who are quite irate. I can’t blame them.”

As general manager, Gates has kept an open-door policy at the office and has sent out weekly emails sharing everything with residents that she knows about contractor schedules, supplies, and wait times.

The emails, also posted online, are informative, supportive, and understanding. They’ve also left an impression on residents.

“She has been very helpful to me personally,” Doyle said of Gates. “We get an update a minimum of one a week... I go into the office once or twice a week just to hear any updates in the meantime. The door is always open.”

Jane Storey said she’s not sure how anybody could complain given the situation and how well Gates has kept them informed.

“She’s great with giving us all the info,” Storey said. “I have not heard one complaint. She’s been awesome.”

Joanne McKay, who has been at Villas West four years full time and 23 altogether, agrees.

“They’ve been under a lot of pressure,” McKay said of the office. “She’s an angel.”

Gates is grateful for the understanding, sometimes giving off a good-natured sigh or tired laugh. She tries not to let the few negative comments overshadow the overwhelming number of appreciative residents.

“We’re not replacing just one building, we’ve got several, and that’s what a lot of people don’t understand. If it were just your individual home the work would have been done by now,” she said. “But we’re doing 224 homes, so it takes a while.”

### **Villas East**

Right across the street in Villas East, the damage is worse by many accounts, but management isn’t talking. Several calls for information were not returned by what appears to be a corporate number.

About 10 days after the July 16 storm, a manager sent out a list of 71 units that were damaged, but since then residents unofficially report that nearly every roof is being replaced.

That’s supported by a row of roofing material stacked in Green Valley Village next door and work trucks that have been in the complex since the storm. There are about 500 units at Villas East.