NYC 9/11 Public Portal Document

NEWSDAY, SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2001

Taking Care of Businesses

Wall Street firms work weekend to get operations ready

By Patricia Hurtado
STAFF WRITER

The electricity was on but the phones and Internet were down at Fredericks Michael & Co.'s offices at 2 Wall St. yesterday. A fine layer of dust coated the desks and the air was thick with the smells of acrid smoke and Lysol. In each of the investment bank's offices there was evidence of people having made a hasty escape Tuesday.

George Carberis, the firm's managing director, surveyed the view outside his office yesterday, calculating the likelihood the firm and Wall Street would be able to open tomorrow. Armed with a dust mask, Carberis, of Northport, and colleagues traveled into lower Manhattan yesterday to retrieve files, forward telephones and evaluate the situation.

"They say Wall Street is going to be operating," said Carberis, gazing out the window onto the New York Stock Exchange, where a cleaning crew steam-cleaned its marble walls.

"I can see the exchange is going to be ready and we'll be here . . . But I don't think we'll want clients to come down here for a meeting," Carberis said, gesturing outside, where armed National Guardsmen and police officers stood guard. Con Ed crews with backhoes tore up Wall Street while other crews spliced power lines.

"It's double," said Michael May, senior vice president of George Comfort & Sons, managing agent for the 22-story building. Since Tuesday, May and his building staff have worked around the clock, first evacuating the building and then getting the building in shape.

On his building's roof, May said his cleaners had found mail from one of the doomed jetliners, all postmarked from Boston en route to Los Angeles, and evacuation instructions from one of the plane's passenger seats.

"My people wanted to come back here to get back to work," May said. "No one said 'No, it's too dangerous.' They're dedicated to seeing this happen."

CITY_21MC100_008016497

NYC-WTC_000230557