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DISASTER RESOURCE GUIDE

WHAT DID WE LEARN FROM HURRICANE IKE?



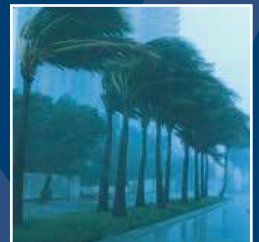
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CAN WE TALK?



Disasters come in all shapes and forms – natural, man-made, and as we have experienced this year – economic disasters. Thankfully, emergency response and recovery for natural disasters is becoming something we know how to do. Response to and recovery from an economic downturn seems less sure.

Are there lessons that can be applied in both situations?

Recently I got a few insights when I stopped by a national home improvement warehouse to buy some supplies for a small project. A few days earlier, one of their vendors had informed me that the company's business was very slow. Of course, this was not surprising information.

Within minutes of walking into the store, an employee stopped and asked if there was anything he could help me with. I got directions and quickly found the right section. As I walked down the aisle, another employee asked if he could be of help. I said yes, and got the information needed.

Something was different that day – and it felt good! When checking out, I asked the cashier, "Has the store implemented any new policies?" She said, "Oh yes, we are all taking care of our #1 priority – our customers." Wow, I knew this – even before she said a word. My experience made me want to come back and spend more money!

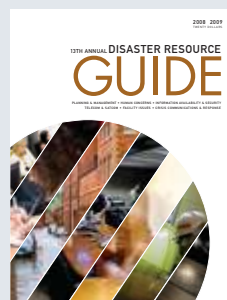
What is to be learned here? Perhaps it is getting back to the basics – remembering to focus on the #1 priority. Businesses must remember who matters most – the customer. If the customer's needs are not met, they won't buy. If they don't buy, the business will cease to exist. Obviously this is simplistic, but there's also much truth here.

What is the lesson for the GUIDE? It is a question to you our readers. What are your needs and concerns? What can we do to better serve you? What content ought to be covered? Are there better ways to get the information to you?

I want to hear from you. Can we talk?

Kathy Rainey
Publisher
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COVER PHOTO COURTESY OF FEMA. Galveston Island, TX, September 22, 2008 – Businesses that were allowed to build on piling in the Gulf of Mexico along Seawall Boulevard are destroyed and/or gone due to Hurricane Ike. The pilings with no structure on it is where a restaurant previously stood. Jocelyn Augustino/FEMA





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A REAL TEST: WHAT DID WE LEARN?

BY VANESSA CHRIS & PAT MOORE

Three years after the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, Ike offered the disaster management community an opportunity to implement the lessons learned. How did the country measure up? Disaster Resource Guide finds out.

As Hurricane Ike inched closer to US soil in the early days of September, and the national news networks became flooded with eye witness videos of its destruction, America braced itself for the worst.

The vicious storm, at one point with a diameter of 550 miles – and hurricane force winds of 240 mph – made Ike the most massive Atlantic hurricane on record.

Its Integrated Kinetic Energy (IKE) – a measure of a storm’s destructive potential that is marked on a scale of one to six – sat at 5.6 a day and a half before reaching the US. To put that into perspective, Katrina only topped out at 5.1.

Many believed that if the storm were to hit the US in the form of a Category 3 or higher, it could easily exceed the destruction left behind by Katrina – leaving many to wonder if the country had truly learned its lesson in emergency preparedness.

Many companies and organizations claimed they were ready. FEMA, for one, had taken drastic efforts to clean up its image – and improve its emergency response efforts – after Katrina.

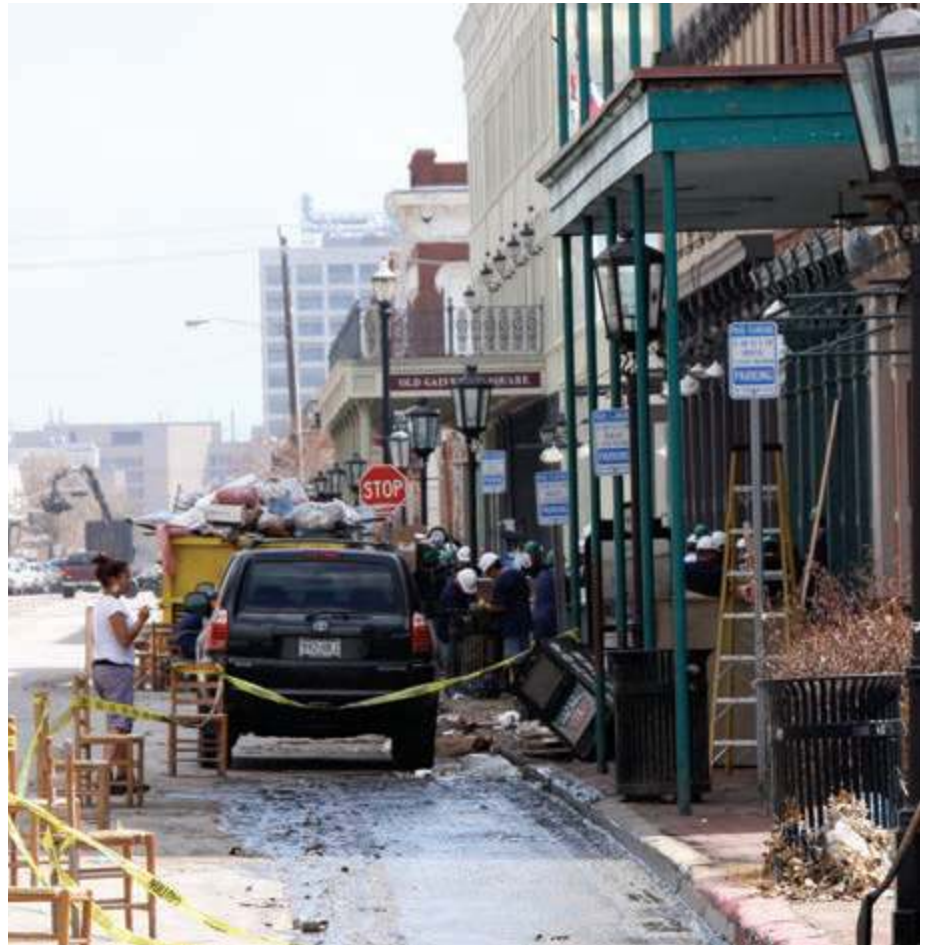


Photo courtesy of FEMA

“We have concentrated on improving responsiveness, customer service, logistics, debris removal, and partnerships with state and local officials,” said FEMA director, David Paulison, in an editorial in the Washington Post. “I have invested heavily in hiring the right leaders with emergency management experience to coordinate federal response efforts.”

The Federal organization enhanced its efforts so that it could register 200,000 disaster victims per day – more than double the number it could handle in 2005 – and tripled the number of post-disaster home inspections it could perform, reaching 20,000 homes per day.

States such as Florida responded promptly to the hurricane’s threat – declaring a state of emergency and implementing mandatory evacuations for all visitors on September 6, two days before the storm was expected to arrive.

But was it enough?

Ike made US landfall at Galveston, Texas, in the early morning of September 13 as a Category 2 hurricane. While its winds were a fraction of what they once had been -- averaging 110 mph – it reached approximately 500 miles across. The hurricane’s sheer size allowed it to pummel a large number of cities – often taking large

amounts of time to pass through them – making it the third most damaging on record, with estimates of property damage ranging around \$27 billion.

Despite the improved efforts, sixty-one people in the US lost their lives and 300 are still missing, causing many to ask the question – what did we get right with Hurricane Ike, and what can we improve upon next time?

Evacuation Planning

Looking back at Hurricane Rita, the Governor of Texas, Rick Perry, recognized that the state's evacuation procedures needed to be improved upon if the state was going to escape Ike with minimal casualties.

For this reason, upon notice of Hurricane Ike's path, he immediately issued a disaster declaration for 88 counties, which allowed the state to provide assistance to local officials. As a result, up to 1,350 buses were made available to support potential evacuations, and more than 800 were sent to pre-stage in San Antonio and 150 to Bee County.

Up to 7,500 guardsmen were on standby for rapid deployment, and 10 UH-60 helicopters were stationed in Austin and San Antonio, while 120 aircraft were on standby in Fort Worth. Two task forces from the Texas Engineering Extension Service were also on standby if search and rescue capabilities were needed.

The Texas Department of Transportation put up message signs urging residents along the coast to fuel up their vehicles in preparation for possible evacuation orders. The state's Fuel Team worked to ensure adequate fuel supplies were available along potential evacuation routes and monitored demand increases. People who were unable to evacuate had the option of letting responders know who and where they were by dialing 211 – a service thousands of people took advantage of.

Specific cities, such as the City of Houston, developed their own plans of attack. After Hurricane Rita, Houston expanded its Hurricane Preparedness Timeline to include all government departments, rather than merely the department of emergency management.

The timeline laid out specific departmental instructions for each stage of a hurricane – starting 120 hours before the expected landfall. While most of the instructions were aimed at the City of Houston's internal departments, there was a version available to local businesses in the area.

After Rita, the City of Houston also received quite a bit of feedback from residents mentioning that it was difficult for them to decipher whether or not they should evacuate. For this reason, user-friendly information services were made available to the public, to indicate which areas were in dire need of evacuation, and which were out of harm's way.

The Zip Zone Map and the website www.houstonhidefromthewind.org enabled residents to determine, via their zip code, whether they were located in storm surge risk areas that were mandatory for evacuation.

The website provided projected wind speeds by zip code – comparing current wind speeds to those of previous hurricanes. This allowed individuals to decide for themselves if they should pack up and leave, or stick it out.

"The use of zip codes also made it easier for the media to disseminate information on the areas covered by a mandatory evacuation to the public," said Sharon Nalls, emergency management coordinator for the City of Houston.

Various jurisdictions in Texas also took advantage of the state's Internet-based incident management system. The system allows various governmental departments to input information about their local area and share it with others.

For example, if there is a traffic accident along one of the evacuation routes, the county's local police department can post a notice on the bulletin board so other jurisdictions can alter their evacuation procedures accordingly.

Individual companies also beefed up their evacuation procedures to ensure business continued to run almost-as-usual. Kinder Morgan, a midstream energy company, relocated essential personnel from its Houston offices to the company's Lakewood, CO office as well as various Dallas hotels.

"For our terminals and pipeline operations where people had to remain in

the area, some relocated to hotels just outside of the expected impact zone, and some bunkered down in reinforced buildings on the property," said Dan Shellenberger, manager of business processes for Kinder Morgan.

Emergency Planning

Businesses and organizations across the board fine-tuned their emergency planning ahead of Hurricane Ike. With the heartbreak of Katrina still sharp in its mind, the medical community in particular took a proactive approach in preparing for what was expected to be one of the largest hurricanes on record.

Nursing homes and other licensed facilities in coastal regions were contacted by the Texas state government to

Various jurisdictions in Texas also took advantage of the state's Internet-based incident management system.

make sure their emergency plans were up-to-date. Staff closely monitored conditions to ensure the safety of those at the Corpus Christi State School.

Throughout the medical districts in the Galveston and Houston areas, operations personnel made arrangements for the relocation and transportation of critically ill and special needs individuals.

In many cases, medical facilities that were at risk of losing power were required to transport all oncology and dialysis patients to safer jurisdictions – often as far away as Austin, Dallas/Ft. Worth and San Antonio.

Doctors and nurses, in addition to their regular patients, made sure these individuals received the necessary levels of care, in most cases having to work 24 hours around the clock for days to accommodate their needs.

Other government departments also sought to leave no stone unturned. The Department of Family and Protective Services instructed foster parents and other caregivers how to report the where-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8



Photo courtesy of FEMA

abouts of children in foster care if they had to evacuate. The Texas Department of Criminal Justice staged nearly 60 inmate transport buses in the Beeville area in case the evacuation of south Texas prison facilities became necessary.

The Texas Department of Agriculture prepared to distribute food commodities and coordinate distribution efforts with the Salvation Army and American Red Cross. Plans were also created to protect livestock in the Department of Agriculture's export pens that stood in the path of Ike.

Electricity and telecommunication accessibility were also on the state's list of priorities. The Public Utility Commission asked electricity providers and telecommunications companies along the Gulf Coast to begin emergency preparations, such as reviewing emergency operations plans, updating critical care customer lists, checking inventories, and alerting crews.

Many businesses and organizations also set up a secure line of satellite communication before the hurricane hit. Kinder Morgan, for example, provided its personnel in the impacted zone with satellite phones as well as a variety of cell phones provided by different carriers – including Nextel PTT, AT&T, and Verizon. The phones included local and out-of-state area codes.

The company also upgraded its corporate directory to include emergency contact information – including cell phone numbers and e-mail addresses – that were exported to an Excel file and provided to each manager and director before the storm hit.

Stewart Title Company, which specializes in information services, kept its business up and running during the storm – as well as its aftermath – by taking pre-emptive steps when it came to technology, messaging and telecommunications.

“The Houston home office campus was closed Friday, September 12th to Tuesday, September 16th, but our business remained open through our remote locations and business resumption center to maintain mission-critical applications,” said Murshid Kahn, Chief Information Officer of Stewart Information Services Corporation.

The company relied on the Internet to maintain its connections with other divisions of the company, and made a point of conducting regular conference calls to disseminate information, identify and resolve issues related to the company's disaster recovery and business continuity efforts.

Stewart Title's remote locations were involved in managing the Customer Care Center during the event – a decision that resulted in minimal call center interruption for customers. And the company's Business Resumption Center was functional well in advance of the storm to maintain operations, in case the Houston campus lost service.

Robert DiLossi, Director, Crisis Management at SunGard Availability Services shared another insight from the recent hurricanes. “If you've taken the time to prepare a plan, follow that plan – don't wait it out,” said DiLossi. “We saw companies choosing not to follow their disaster recovery plan until sig-

nificantly into the event, which caused unnecessary complications and delay.” He also noted that with so much of the region impacted even feeding employees was not an easy task.

The Aftermath

When Ike finally veered off into the Atlantic, an unthinkable number of states – including Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, Tennessee, Kentucky, Indiana, Missouri, Ohio and Pennsylvania – suffered from its destruction. But only parts of Texas and Louisiana were officially declared major disaster areas by President Bush, granting them federal funding.

At the end of September, FEMA agreed to grant Texas an extension on its reimbursement period, given the exceptional destruction and debris left behind by Ike. By October 9th, Texas officials were pleading with FEMA to send more trailers as fast as possible to the Beaumont, Texas area.

County officials said about 4000 trailers were needed as thousands were still homeless and very little housing was available. Thousands were sleeping in cars and tents outside their flooded homes.

While many areas suffered from devastation, Galveston and Chambers County, TX, undeniably bore the brunt of it. The storm hit these areas first and, unlike other parts of the country, few residents chose to heed authorities' warnings and evacuate.

Even though there were advance evacuation plans, Mary Jo Naschke, spokesperson for the city of Galveston, estimated that a quarter of the city's residents ignored evacuation calls, despite predictions that most of Galveston Island would suffer heavy flooding storm tide.

Widespread floods – reaching six feet in some areas – enveloped Galveston as the storm hit. The next day, rescuers went door-to-door to check on the estimated 20,000 people who failed to flee Hurricane Ike.

Houston, the country's fourth-largest city, was also paralyzed by Ike – suffering from shattered skyscraper windows and streets blocked with debris and downed trees. Many residents were left without power for an average of

2½ weeks – and wastewater treatment plants and water treatment plants alike also suffered.

“When the electricity went off, we began losing water pressure,” Ms Naschke said. “Smaller communities might have one wastewater treatment plant, so it doesn’t cost them a lot to back it up with a generator. In larger metropolitan areas, such as Houston, it gets expensive.”

Nalls said, next time around, this is something Houston will be better prepared for. There is already talk of introducing legislation that would ensure that all water systems and water treatment systems have appropriate generated power – especially for-profit organizations.

While this would undoubtedly cost a lot of money for many companies and government bodies in Houston, Nalls said it’s necessary.

Shelter

Providing adequate shelter for evacuees in an efficient manner was one of the emergency management commu-

nity’s greatest failures in the wake of Katrina – primarily because the vast amount of emergency resources were never required before.

In 2008, the emergency management community refused to be caught off-guard again. The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) made hurricane housing resources available for communities on the agency’s website. The TDHCA also contacted agencies in the projected path of the storm, advising them that they might be called upon to serve more people.

The City of Houston took pride in its ability to quickly respond to the shelter needs of evacuees. While it took the city several days to prepare appropriate shelter for Katrina’s victims, this time around it only took the city a couple of days to set up 800 cots, along with portable showers, hand washing stations and toilets after Ike.

After temporarily escaping the storm in San Antonio and Dallas/Fort Worth, evacuees were bussed home and – if their homes were still standing – were

offered city-funded taxi passes to allow them to return. If their homes were destroyed – or in an area where residents were not yet being admitted back – they had the opportunity to register in the city’s makeshift shelter.

The city also shipped in an abundance of dirt and grass to create a fenced-in area for pets. The area included fans and separated kennels, as well as security services.

Not everything went according to plan, however. FEMA’s manufactured houses were slow to trickle in due to health concerns regarding formaldehyde in some trailers. Formaldehyde – a toxic chemical that’s common in new carpets, glue, and permanent press materials, among other things – has been a common problem with FEMA’s manufactured houses, and were said to cause many respiratory illnesses during Katrina.

The federal organization has previously worked with the Centers for Control and Prevention to conduct indoor air assessments. To avoid further respira-

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Photo courtesy of FEMA

tory ailments, every trailer had to be tested for formaldehyde before being deployed after Ike, which slowed down the process.

As of late October, about 150 families were housed in FEMA-provided mobile homes, and about 1,150 additional families were still waiting on them, according to the Houston Chronicle.

Room for Improvement

While Ike was significantly less devastating than Katrina, lives were still lost – which means there are still lessons to be learned.

“You can do as many exercises and drills as you want, but the problem with those is that everything goes according to plan,” said Sharon Nalls of the City of Houston. “You have to be engaged in planning – but the plans have to be flexible enough so you don’t have to fit a square problem into a round solution.”

Nalls recognizes that after any emergency, there is always room for improvement – especially when there are casualties involved. After Ike, Houston lost seven – with that number expected to rise as, at the time of printing, many were still missing.

Nalls says many of the casualties were a result of improper use of power generators – an area she expects will get much more attention in preparation for the next hurricane. Simple lessons such as following a power generator’s instructions, or waiting for it to cool before refueling it, will be included in future public preparedness materials, she said.

Emphasizing the importance of stocking up with enough materials to survive

a month-long power outage will also be included in the materials. While many people could survive three days without power, few people in Houston were prepared for 2½ weeks – which was the average amount of time without power.

The City of Houston also aimed to educate members of the disabled community regarding the limitations of emergency services personnel.

“While firefighters can carry a person out of a home, it’s very difficult for them to carry electric wheelchairs with heavy batteries,” said Nalls. “If we’re honest with people, that will allow them to make better arrangements on their end.”

While individual preparedness is obviously a major issue – and an area that will always need special attention in the wake of a hurricane – business preparedness should also be a matter of priority.

Ed Minyard, CEO of ResponseForce1, said – in Galveston, at least – levels of preparedness were mixed. “We’ve seen examples of apparently well-planned recovery, such as the Bank of America mobile banking unit, which is positioned outside of their damaged brick-and-mortar branch and providing a full range of services,” he said. “Then, on the other end of the spectrum, we see the impact on small businesses, most of which were severely impacted and have yet to re-open for business.”

Minyard said small business is the real story of Ike. In a town of mom and pop shops and franchises, most independents don’t have the support infrastructure to establish a disaster resiliency plan or a business continuity plan.

“It’s all about the day-to-day business that keeps them afloat – or not,” he said. “Even with the low-interest-rate loans being offered by the SBA, recovery will not be easy.”

One month after Hurricane Ike left town, there were still large areas of Galveston without power. Only about half the original population had returned and many wondered how many would, in fact, return.

Minyard said there are many methods to help small businesses weather the next hurricane – and most solutions involved encouraging them to work together.

“We can’t expect that The Children’s Palace will have the resources that a Target has. But, it might be possible to form a group-buying consortium, possibly through the auspices of an organization like the Chamber of Commerce,” he said. “This could provide for an arrangement of ‘co-opetition’ amongst the members.”

That term, originally coined by Andy Grove of Intel, implies that even competitors must cooperate on occasion to ensure the survival of the group, Minyard said. He added that teaming together to acquire the resources to support both resiliency planning, as well as recovery, could be beneficial to all involved.

Steps have been taken towards this measure. In October, the Galveston Chamber of Commerce held a Disaster Recovery Workshop for its members.

“This is a laudable effort to assist chamber members in moving forward towards recovery,” Minyard said. “The suggestion here is that future meetings should address disaster preparedness, as well.”

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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WHEN THE POWER WENT OUT...

TOYOTA'S PLAN KEPT THE SUPPLY CHAIN MOVING

BY JERRY L'HOMMEDIU



At Toyota Financial Services (TFS), every emergency event teaches us new lessons, helps us improve our emergency management program, and lets us evaluate how we can best protect our associates and better serve our customers. And Hurricane Ike, which slammed into the Texas coast on Friday, September 12, was no different.

TFS has a sales finance office in Houston that supports local dealerships with financing and provides retail and lease financing, as well as various additional products such as vehicle service agreements, for consumers through the dealerships it supports. While officials were not calling for a mandatory evacuation in Houston, our Property Manager advised that they would be shutting down the building at 6:00 PM on Thursday and it would not reopen until

the hurricane had passed and a damage assessment had been completed.

The few hours of advanced notice we were given provided just enough time to backup our data, provide external communications to our dealers, protect our work-in-progress, and communicate plans to our associates. Any notice is a luxury and this short time frame emphasized the importance of having detailed shut down procedures in place and associates well trained on the process. We knew the office would be closed on Friday and we speculated that we would probably be closed on Saturday; we never anticipated being closed for six days and certainly not for a power failure.

Our emergency operations center was notified that power failed in our Houston office at about 1:00 AM on Saturday morning. Neither TFS nor building management maintains a backup generator sufficient to support full normal business operations but we anticipated power would be restored in several hours at the most. What we learned on Saturday morning, however, was that the entire Houston metropolitan area was without power and it was anticipated it could be up to four weeks before full power was restored to all locations.

By Saturday afternoon the brunt of the storm had passed but Houston was experiencing torrential rains. Since our management had electronic home phone systems and no personal generators, and cell phone service was congested and intermittent, communicating was extremely difficult. On Sunday, our local manager drove to the office to determine if there was any damage and then drove by a number of dealerships to determine if they had incurred any damage. These efforts were confounded by the fact that you could not buy gas or use an ATM or get groceries due to the lack of power. Our manager relied upon a neighbor's generator to recharge his cell phone and laptop.

By Sunday afternoon our emergency management team was able to initiate more normal communications with our local manager and, with the aid of local news reports, we began to gain a better understanding of the scope of damage in southeast Texas. We determined there was no evident damage to our build-

ing although security would not allow us back in until power was restored. We also learned, over the course of the next two days, that our distributor had incurred wind and water damage to several of its buildings and that several of the dealerships the office supports had experienced moderate to significant damage to their facilities and to their inventory of vehicles.

We were also able to contact all of our associates and determine only one associate had incurred any damage to their home and all were safe. We also knew from news reports that many of our customers had lost or incurred damage to their homes or their workplace, many had been displaced, and some may have lost their vehicles as a result of the storm. We were also surprised to learn that our Cincinnati office was without power and closed due to a regional power outage caused by remnants of Hurricane Ike sweeping through Ohio.

TFS was able to reroute work from our Houston office to other sales finance offices and our local focus was to support dealerships, customers and the community. Our distributor, despite its own facility damage, provided virtually every dealership with a portable generator to support basic business operations and dealerships began opening for business as early as Sunday. Surprisingly, business was brisk and TFS responded with special financing programs for customers who were located in impacted areas. In addition, our customer service centers were notified to provide special assistance to any customer calling in who indicated they had experienced any hardship from Hurricane Ike. And finally, the local distributor and various Toyota entities contributed a total of \$1 million to local relief efforts.

Power was finally restored to our Houston office on late Wednesday afternoon and normal business operations resumed on Thursday morning. Many associates remained without power at home for several additional days and were happy to come to work to escape the 90+ degree weather without air conditioning.

TFS experienced some surprises and valuable lessons learned from Hurricane Ike. We were not anticipating an

extensive and prolonged regional power failure and the communication challenges this created are something we want to address going forward. We currently have the ability to work remotely with laptops, Blackberries, and cell phones but we have to ensure our ability to easily recharge these tools over a prolonged period of time. Communications during and immediately following an event are often challenging and we found that expanded call trees and personal cell phone numbers, especially for support staff outside the local area, are crucial to maximizing our ability to contact individuals and assess the situation.

Also, thorough shut down procedures are essential when given advance notice to ensure system integrity and effective communications with customers and other stakeholders. And in addition to promoting associates maintaining emergency supplies and provisions at home, we'll also reinforce that they fill up with fuel and stop off at the ATM when given advance warning of a pending event since those services may not be available immediately following the event.

Finally, the "supply chain" of business for Toyota Financial Services is critically important for our ongoing business operations. To protect our own business continuity, we need to ensure the ability of our ports, our distributor, and our dealers to maintain ongoing business operations and provide vehicles and related finance products to consumers. Developing an integrated and comprehensive response among all stakeholders is essential.

For many in southeast Texas, it will take a very long time to recover from Hurricane Ike. Fortunately, Toyota Financial Services was able to weather the storm and recover business operations as quickly as possible with minimum impact to our customers, our associates, and our dealers.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

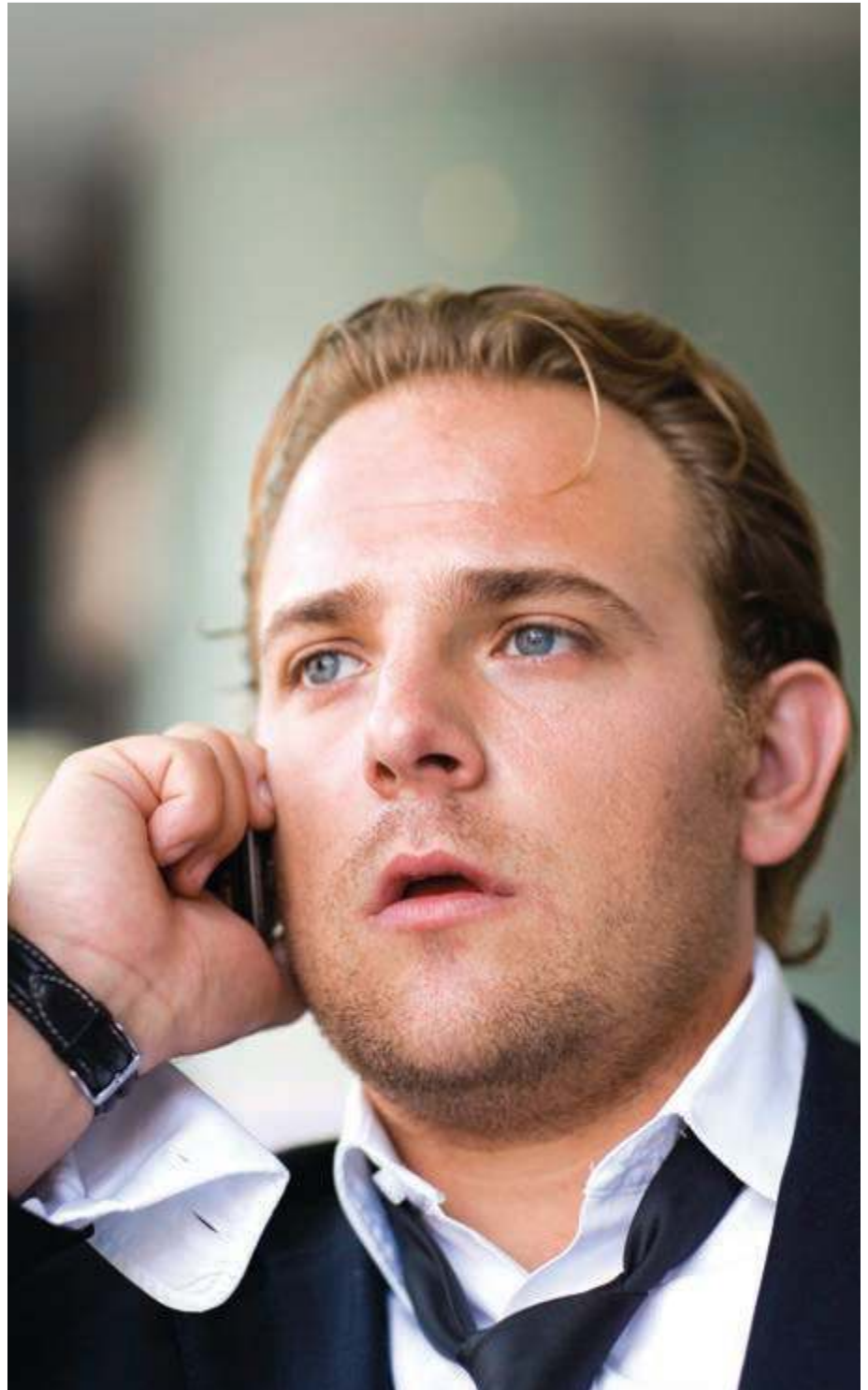
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SURVIVING IKE: LESSONS LEARNED AT A TEXAS HEALTH CARE COMPANY

BY GLEN BRICKER

Ike presented many companies with the ultimate test of their previous business continuity planning efforts. A health care company — responsible for managing cancer treatment centers through the US with offices in north Houston and a distribution center in Dallas — had created a business continuity program, with this author's consulting firm, Avalution, that would allow the company to continue providing support to critical medical practices throughout a hurricane such as Ike. The company also wanted to be able to provide local crisis management and recovery abilities.

The plan, created for the practice groups, emphasized communications, including a virtual PBX environment to maintain critical published numbers



and a remotely established 800 number for message dissemination. A secure web page, part of the remote plan hosting system, was also established to post detailed information.

During the hurricane and the period immediately after, the relocated PBX, information line and web messages worked flawlessly and kept the remote practice groups informed and operating on a consistent basis. Local emergency communications, however, proved more difficult.

Recovery plans relied on the ability of the crisis management team to communicate via cellular phones, satellite phones and email. During recovery, cellular service proved to be unreliable. Service was limited prior to the storm due to governmental priority for use of the systems as well as after the storm when infrastructure damage and power outages made conditions even worse for wireless communication.

In a post-event de-brief, the client identified two potential additions to the communications strategy, as well as a fallback to help address these problems:

- add non-PBX hard-line phones at both the primary and EOC locations, as they proved to be more reliable and provided an additional channel
- add SMS messaging to the outgoing message strategy, as SMS uses much less bandwidth and time than voice communications and increases the odds that the message will get through.
- as a final communications fallback, the company suggested establishing a specific time to convene at a pre-established EOC if all communications fail.

The impact analysis and detailed plans, combined with the availability of those plans through a hosted repository, allowed management to implement an effective recovery in the aftermath of the storm.

The client said that knowing who had to be up and going first was very important. The client's first building was up and running within 36 hours of the storm with critical staff engaged. The second building was operational within 96 hours of Ike's passing.



Employee availability issues: daytime family support

Another critical lesson learned, from a departmental recovery perspective, involved employee availability in the aftermath of a major regional event. Though power to the company's facilities was restored in a short period of time, mainly due to being located in close proximity to the airport, many employees' homes in other areas of Houston were without power for more than a week – creating a major challenge in filling recovery teams.

Additionally, many employees had left the area prior to the storm and were unwilling or unable to return quickly; even those who remained in the area were not immediately available, as many were understandably more concerned with the welfare of their family than reporting to work.

The company identified potential opportunities for strategy enhancements that included:

- Using company facilities for daytime family support, providing resources that would create an incentive for employees to report to work
- Establishing recovery work sites out of the hurricane area that include provisions for housing displaced families, reducing the number of key employees who will become unavail-

able because they had to relocate their families, often to relatives in distant locations

- Evaluating the need to establish permanently staffed second locations as a solution for functions (if any) that have been identified as too time sensitive to tolerate 24 – 36 hours of downtime

Overall, while Hurricane Ike did not create catastrophic damage to the company's facilities, it did create significant stress on the infrastructure in the Houston area. In doing so it brought two of the major components of a successful recovery, communications and people, to the forefront.

The event highlighted limitations to current technology solutions and the need to look outside of company activities to understand and plan for potential human and technological impacts of a greater regional event.

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COMPREHENSIVE TESTING

CREATES “OPERATIONAL FAMILIARITY” BETWEEN COMPANIES AND THEIR DISASTER RECOVERY PROVIDERS

BY RODNEY TYLER

During the recovery efforts following Hurricane Ike, organizations that conducted comprehensive tests of their recovery plans were operational in the allotted time with very little – if any – complications. One of the benefits observed within the organizations that tested was a sense of “operational familiarity” between the recovering organization and the Disaster Recovery (DR) provider.

A simple way to define operational familiarity is the personnel of two different organizations understanding how to work best with each other, developing a sense of reliance and trust in the others’ abilities. In many situations, the operational familiarity between the organizations was just as important as the technical know-how of the personnel and properly functioning equipment.

Testing provided organizations and DR coordinators a “point of reference,” and when issues would arise, it was not uncommon for one to say to the other, “Let’s configure it like the last time we tested.” Having conducted comprehensive testing, both organizations were



aware of the others’ capabilities, personalities and how best to work with each other.

In addition to the increased recovery time, the operational familiarity created a sense of purpose and experience among those that had already completed the test. Each department knew what

was expected of them, that it could be done, and knew what the other was doing. Additionally, the company was aware of the full extent of support the DR provider could provide. However, several organizations with untested or insufficiently tested DR plans did not do as well.

In an untested disaster recovery environment, hardware and software issues are probably easier to resolve than personality conflicts. Finding out a server isn't properly functioning in a disaster situation would be extremely disruptive to meeting a set recovery time. Just as, if not more disruptive, is discovering an individual responsible for an aspect of an organization's recovery does not work well with others under pressure.

To illustrate the point: One organization completed a comprehensive test about a month before Hurricane Ike. The organization discovered some software issues they were able to resolve. After Hurricane Ike, the organization declared and was fully operational within hours of a mobile recovery center being on site. Because of testing, the recovery was a success.

On the other hand, another organization never tested, then declared after Hurricane Ike. The mobile recovery center arrived on site, and was ready to be populated; all of the DR provider's hardware and software was in order within a few hours of deploying to the site. However, the company was having a software error on their end. The software glitch probably would have been revealed if prior testing had occurred.

Instead of being able to install and bring up several workstations simultaneously, the IT director had to bring each one up individually, taking more than two hours, the time projected to bring the workstations up. Due to a lack of testing, the IT director was not comfortable listening to the suggestions of the DR personnel. The recovering organization then sent another specialist from another city 200 miles away to the site to provide a new perspective on the problem.

The new specialist arrived on site and fixed the problem within the hour. Within four hours, the site was fully operational. The solution the new specialist implemented was the same solution the DR provider personnel had recommended.

Another observation: Organizations that tested had a faster recovery time, creating more time and resources to find solutions to logistical and personnel issues. Hurricane Ike severely

hampered supply lines for everything from gasoline to food. Power was out for several weeks in some areas, and many places had to scramble to find portable toilets. Finding fuel for vehicles, let alone generators, was difficult. Because of testing and trust in their DR provider, the technical side of the business recovery was not an issue the company had to worry about.

To create operational familiarity, tests must be as realistic and stressful as a controlled setting can provide, such as setting challenging time lines to be met to be considered a successful test. The test should closely resemble an organization's actual recovery plan. An organization's leadership also has to support and establish a serious tone for the testing.


If a DR provider only allows a customer to "test" in the DR provider's parking lot, or does not test all parts of the recovery plan, there are several variables left to be determined in a disaster. Organizations should be able to "declare" a test, as they would

an actual disaster. Additionally, if a DR provider makes simply testing a challenge; it raises the question of how responsive the DR provider will be in an actual disaster.

Testing enables an organization to verify that in a disaster, their business operations will be taken care of, allowing the organization to focus on the actual impact of the disaster. Testing also fosters confidence, competence, communication and understanding – operational familiarity – between two organization's personnel. Waiting until a disaster to implement an untested plan could end up being the costliest "test" of a DR plan.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Rodney Tyler, Service Development Manager for Rentsys Recovery Services, Inc., worked closely with companies recovering during Hurricane Ike. He has been in the Disaster Recovery Industry for more than 10 years and has helped multiple Fortune 500 companies develop business recovery strategies. He can be contacted at 800.566.9113 or via email: rodney.tyler@rentsysrecovery.com.



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EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS MATTERS!

BY TOMMY RAINEY

Since the mid 80s, the emergency management community has preached a clear and consistent message: Prepare businesses, schools and homes to be self sufficient for 3 days. Way back then, some even suggested 7 days! All agreed that after a major disaster, it could be days before outside help arrives. The importance of personal preparedness was re-emphasized after 9/11 by former Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge: “We can be afraid or we can be ready.”

Today, more than ever before, emergency preparedness matters. We live in a fast-moving interdependent world. When it comes to the basics of life, we look to others to provide our needs – gasoline, food, medical care, water. We are surprised if a gas shortage causes stations to run out of gas. When we turn on the water faucet, it never occurs to us that we’d get anything but clean water. In almost every community, there are 24-hour grocery



Photo courtesy of FEMA

A resident of Oak Island, TX looks at her new mobile home. She and her family lived on a boat and in tents after Hurricane Ike destroyed her home.

stores and drug stores we can rely on in the middle of the night.

However, our 24/7 connected world includes a host of risks – hurricanes, earthquakes, terrorism, avian flu – just to name a few, that threaten to devastate individuals, businesses and communities.

The emergency management community has known and preached a clear message for more than two decades: Pre-

paredness is a personal responsibility. It takes time and money to prepare, and the money spent may never really be needed. But in a disaster, investments in preparedness will return dividends a thousand-fold.

Business Responsibility for Workplace Preparedness

Risk assessment is a sophisticated area of expertise that can range from

self-assessment to an extensive engineering study. The specific industry, size and scope of your individual company will determine your organization's risk assessment needs. Know what kinds of emergencies might affect your company both internally and externally. Find out which natural disasters are most common in the areas where you operate. You may be aware of some of your community's risks; others may surprise you.¹ Visit Ready.gov for information on various threats: biological threats, chemical threats, explosions, nuclear blasts, radiation threats and natural disasters.

Remember...your business is responsible to protect your employees while they are at work.

Here are ways you can help your employees – at work, at home and on the road.

1. Prepare to Meet Basic Needs

Consider the needs for shelter-in-place as well as when evacuation is required. Encourage employees to assemble or buy an emergency kit for home and automobile. Your employees won't be available to work after a disaster if their families are not taken care of.

Some important considerations:

- **Water:** Amounts for portable kits will vary. Individuals should determine what amount they are able to both store comfortably and transport to other locations. If it is feasible, store one gallon of water per person per day, for drinking and sanitation. Long shelf-life water pouches, as used in the marine industry, reduce the need to rotate water as often. Don't forget that more water is needed for individuals who will be involved in rescue efforts.
- **Food:** Plan for a minimum three-day supply of non-perishable food. Long shelf-life foodbars, as used in the marine industry, or military Meals Ready to Eat (MREs) can reduce the need to rotate food as frequently.
- **Warmth:** Include a solar or mylar blanket for each person. Compact, waterproof, and wind-resistant – mylar blankets are ideal for preparedness because they serve so many uses. A mylar blanket can deflect

heat when used as a shelter from the sun. It also conserves body heat when wrapped around a person.

- **Light:** Include a combination of lighting options: safety lightsticks, flashlights and candles. Don't forget to store extra batteries and rotate them more often if stored in the heat.
- **Medical Supplies:** Workplace medical emergencies vary greatly depending on the disaster, type of job and the worksite. Heavy equipment operators face different safety risks than do office workers or food service personnel. Regardless of the type of work, there are steps which can give you the upper hand in responding to a medical emergency.²

Encourage employees to take basic First Aid and CPR training. Offer on-site classes for your co-workers.

Keep first aid supplies in stock and easily accessible. Differentiate between routine medical supplies and those for disasters.

Encourage employees to talk about medical conditions that may require support or special care in an emergency. Don't forget critical medications.

Keep employee emergency contact information on file and up-to-date. Store a copy with other vital records in your emergency kit and another at an off-site location.

- **Sanitation:** Simple supplies such as plastic bags have a multitude of uses during a disaster. Be sure to stock moist towelettes and toilet paper. People affected by natural and man made disasters are more likely to become ill and die from diseases related to inadequate sanitation and water supplies than from any other single cause.³ The World Health Organization (www.who.int) has a helpful fact sheet on sanitation.
- **Communication:** Battery-powered radio and extra batteries can keep you informed. A whistle can be an important communication tool to signal for help.
- **Protection:** Ready.gov recommends storing the following items: Dust masks to filter particles, wrench or pliers for turning off utilities, plastic sheeting and duct tape to "seal a room". Companies may want to

consider the purchase of search and rescue equipment which may be necessary for major disasters in which 911 can't respond immediately.

2. Encourage Employees to Prepare Vital Personal Information

Encourage employees to review important personal paperwork and possibly store some documents in their emergency kit. Copies of some documents might also be sent to family members living in other areas. A partial list:

- Medical records
- Insurance policies
- Credit cards and bank account information
- Household inventory
- Deeds
- Important telephone numbers
- Spare keys
- Cash

Family Communications Plan

Your employees and their families may not be together when disaster strikes. It is essential that they plan how they will contact other family members in various scenarios. Ready.gov has excellent information on how to develop a family plan. Out-of-town contacts may be in a better position to communicate among separated family members. Every family member should know the emergency contact name and phone number.

Preparing our country must be done at the grassroots level – family by family, business by business, and community by community. Is your company prepared? Are your employees and their families prepared?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tommy Rainey is Executive Publisher of the annual Disaster Resource GUIDE and the weekly Continuity e-GUIDE, and Vice President of Emergency Lifeline, a California Corporation founded in 1985 to help businesses, government agencies and families prepare for emergencies or disasters. He can be reached at (714) 558-8940 ext 804 or www.emergencylifeline.com

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PUBLISHED BY EMERGENCY LIFELINE CORP.

PO Box 15243
Santa Ana, CA 92735
Tel: (714) 558-8940
Fax: (714) 558-8901
info@disaster-resource.com
www.disaster-resource.com
Executive Publisher: W.T. Rainey
Publisher: Kathy Gannon Rainey
Editor: Vanessa Chris
Directory Coordinator: Carlos Rincon
Production Coordinator: Daniel Herrera
Advertising Sales: Troy Everett, Clayton Bauland
Circulation: Carmen Plascencia
Office Support: Elizabeth and William Rainey

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Trend Offset Printing
Luis Alvarado Design
– Luis Alvarado
– Trina Werkema

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Disaster Resource GUIDE (USPS 024-902) – Volume 13
Issue 1, August 2008 – is published quarterly (March, May, August and November) by Emergency Lifeline Corporation, 1510 East Edinger Ste D, Santa Ana CA 92705 and mailed/distributed to qualified individuals who have requested a copy and who have oversight or responsibility for business continuity, enterprise risk, crisis management, emergency response, and/or homeland security. Individual copies are available for \$20.00. Periodicals postage paid at Santa Ana, CA, and at additional mailing offices.

Views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those held by the publishers. The publishers do not accept responsibility for the veracity of statements made by the editorial or advertising contributors. The information is printed in good faith.

Postmaster: Send address changes to
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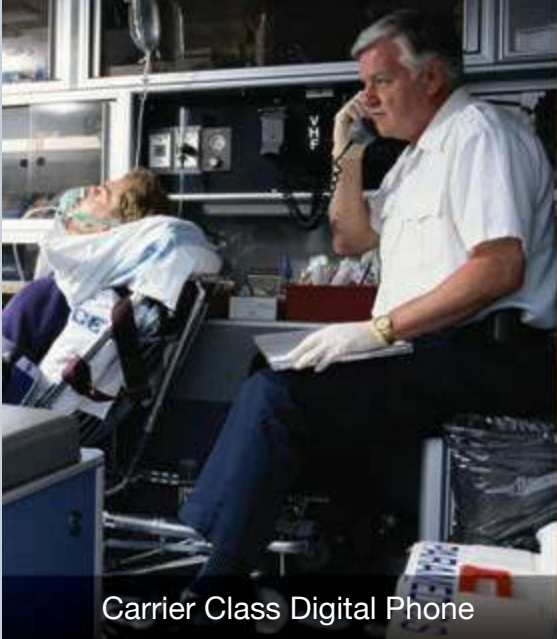
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