

Galveston turns to Cotton for generator power, cleanup and restoration after Hurricane Ike

Background

Despite emergency preparedness training, there was no way the County of Galveston, Texas, could have anticipated the fury of Hurricane Ike. Winds topped 110 miles per hour and an 18-foot storm surge inundated downtown Galveston with nearly eight feet of saltwater. The mechanical room in the circa 1921 Galveston County Historical Museum was under seven feet of water. The Galveston County Courthouse received nearly two feet of water, soaking thousands of legal documents. In total, County of Galveston facilities sustained \$5 million in damage.



Challenges

With no electrical power and a sunrise to sunset curfew, how would cleanup of Galveston progress? Just getting to the island was a challenge as thousands of vehicles jammed the only three-lane highway that accesses the mainland. Equally challenging was the difficult ferry ride across debris-strewn Galveston Bay to get workers and supplies to Bolivar Peninsula, the 27-mile-long barrier island just east of Galveston.



Restoring the World



Solutions

Cotton immediately supplied Galveston with 13 oversized generators to power county facilities. This was critical for cleanup, but also to provide 24/7 electrical power to vital county offices like public safety facilities and jails – both on the mainland and on Bolivar Peninsula. The County of Galveston established cleanup and restoration priorities for Cotton for nine facilities, beginning with the Crystal Beach Annex on Bolivar Peninsula and the Galveston County Courthouse on the mainland. Priorities changed frequently as facilities became accessible and as citizens' needs warranted. Cotton's 400-member team was always flexible and responded quickly to bring its crews to designated worksites.

Cotton dried, dehumidified, cleaned and sanitized all facilities affected by floodwaters. Cotton also oversaw the recovery of thousands of valuable legal and historical documents housed at the Galveston County Courthouse and the Galveston County Historical Museum. After initial clean-up, multitudes of 18-wheelers transported the documents for freeze-drying, saving many irreplaceable documents.

Proven Experience, Powerful Results

Cotton responded at lightening speed to help the County of Galveston get back to its business of serving county residents. In just 10 days, Cotton restored the Crystal Beach Annex on Bolivar Peninsula. In only three weeks, Cotton removed damaged documents and restored the Galveston County Courthouse. Constant communication between Cotton and the County of Galveston enabled Cotton to immediately dispatch crews to meet the county's critical, and ever changing, needs.



Restoring the World

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"The County of Galveston was very fortunate to have Cotton on board after Hurricane Ike caused widespread damage to our county and the Texas Gulf Coast. I contacted Cotton the morning after the storm. The Cotton team responded immediately, mobilizing workers and equipment and surveying the damage. Although we sustained a great deal of damage, it would have been much more had it not been for Cotton's ability to ramp up their remediation crews."

Charles Kenworthy

Facilities Manager County of Galveston

