

AT&T's Support for Hurricane Katrina Victims

Background

- AT&T, then SBC Communications Inc., monitored news and weather reports as Hurricane Katrina crossed Florida and grew into a Category 5 storm in the Gulf of Mexico.
- At the first reports of evacuees possibly relocating to Texas, the company researched possible venues, potential infrastructure and communications needs and coordinated efforts with local relief agencies, recognizing that wired and wireless telecommunications can serve as lifelines for victims, relief workers, FEMA and other public safety entities.

Initial Action

- The company immediately assessed and met the most crucial communications needs for evacuees, American Red Cross, FEMA and other relief agencies by installing additional phone lines, landline telephones, high speed (DSL) broadband service for Internet access, desktop computers, wireless phones and voice mailboxes at each shelter.
- A collaborative crisis response team of AT&T and AT&T Pioneers, employee/retiree volunteers was organized to help assist evacuees with phone and Internet service.
- An employee donations program was established, with matching funds from the AT&T Foundation, to raise money for Katrina relief agencies.

Immediate and Ongoing Support for Evacuees

- AT&T installed 1,500 telephone lines and 300 high speed broadband (DSL) lines for evacuee access (1,000 lines at the Astrodome in Houston, 250 at the Dallas Convention Center and Reunion Arena in Dallas, 250 at Kelly USA in San Antonio).
- Through a collaborative effort of AT&T, IBM, AMD and Houston nonprofit agency Technology for All, 300 computers were installed at the four major Texas shelters for evacuees to use the Internet to search electronically for their lost family members and to register their contact information and location.
- The AT&T team, with the support of partners, created an evacuee registry and search function to help evacuees find their loved ones, and the crawler technology to search 15 Web sites (e.g., NOLA.com, craigslist.com, redcross.com, fema.gov and others) in one keystroke for persons who had registered on one site, but perhaps not others.
- The AT&T team modified the company's external Web sites to provide crucial relief numbers and links to find or contact missing family members and raise money for major relief agencies.
- Via its intranet, AT&T encouraged employees to sign up as volunteers, provided donation information for Katrina relief and updated employees of AT&T's relief activities.
- Approximately 3,000 AT&T Pioneers donated 30,000 volunteer hours helping evacuees in the main shelters make free local and long distance telephone calls, set up personal voice mailboxes and use AT&T services to register or to find missing loved ones.

- AT&T, its employees, its Foundation and AT&T Pioneers donated more than \$7 million in financial contributions, in-kind services and equipment.

Connections Made

- More than 25,000 evacuees relied on AT&T's communications technology to make 364,000 long distance calls from the AT&T telephone banks at the four main Texas shelters to find family members or alert them as to their shelter locations.
- More than 2,000 evacuees searched online and found spouses, children and other family members as a result of AT&T Internet access services.
- More than 22,500 evacuees used AT&T's high speed Internet access.