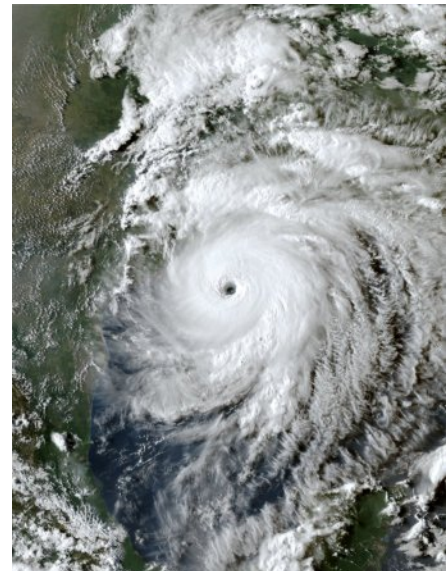


When the electricity to your home goes out, it's a problem. When it goes out for a region, it's an emergency.

When Hurricane Laura made landfall early in the morning on August 27th with sustained winds of 150 mph, and higher gusts as it roared ashore, it became one of the top five hurricanes overall to hit the U.S.

Initial landfall, at near peak intensity, occurred in the southwest corner of Louisiana near the Texas border. The town of Cameron, Louisiana took a direct hit by the Category 4 storm which also produced storm surges of more than 10 feet. Progressing inland across southwestern Louisiana, Laura produced destructive winds and damage across a wide area before it weakened to a tropical depression and moved further north. Recovery efforts were hampered by additional rainfall in the days after Laura had passed.



The governors of both Texas and Louisiana surveyed the storm damage to their respective states once the storm moved on. Many homes and businesses were damaged or destroyed, numerous roads were impassable due to flooding and/or debris blocking the roadway, and some areas saw complete destruction in their power grids, with close to a million people without power.

Just **ONE** 500 kilovolt transmission line had **72** structures damaged beyond repair

To replace **EACH** damaged structure requires **Three Truckloads of Material** & **1,300 Man-Hours**

System wide, the major power company in the region had wide-spread damage to 292 substations, damage to the distribution system that involved 9,760 poles, 3,729 transformers and 18,707 spans of wire. *

To put the task into perspective, one 500 kilovolt transmission line in southwest Louisiana had 72 structures damaged beyond repair. Just one of those structures takes three 18-wheelers worth of materials

* USATODAY.com – 9/9/03; “Extraordinary work underway to rebuild, electric, water, cell grid after Hurricane Laura”; <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/local/louisiana/2020/09/03/hurricane-laura-recovery-damaged-utility-grid-take-weeks-repair/5690935002/>

and 1,300 man hours to replace. That is effectively 72 construction projects, in an emergency situation, all needing replaced. The effort required a full-scale reconstruction, and the sheer logistics of rebuilding each line included many moving parts.

Where do you start?

For the WESCO/Anixter team, the planning for a storm of this gravity began days prior to the actual storm. In the case of WESCO's overall pre-disaster implementation plan, and the role supply chain management plays in the process, planning was going to be key to a successful restoration effort. During storms such as these, there is no time to waste when getting the electricity back up and running and having a clear pre-plan of action is essential.

“ A few days before Laura made landfall, the team started planning for resources...

A few days before Laura made landfall, the team started planning for resources, assessing inventory in branches; dedicating stock for storm recovery; working with suppliers to order additional supplies; staging employees that could easily be deployed to assist in the area; identifying potential staging areas; and, reviewing logistical options to get materials to those locations.

As part of the ongoing WESCO/Anixter Emergency Preparedness Plan, storm stock is allocated throughout our distribution networks for fast deployment in situations such as this. Storm kits, bug spray, raincoats, PPE and other safety supplies, MRO, poleline hardware, wire, poles and other distribution materials are ready to ship as needed.

The largest safety requirement going into an event such as this is training and experience. WESCO traditionally accomplishes both by requiring ongoing OSHA training and various other health and safety training. Having a bench of experienced personnel that can be deployed quickly is invaluable to these efforts. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) was identified, obtained and issued to employees along with other safety supplies that might be needed for protection.

Using the pre-disaster implementation plan meant that the WESCO/Anixter team was a step ahead of the storm.



Help is on the way!

With a catastrophe of this extent and with the severe damage to key components of the grid, it was not a repair situation - it required a far more complex infrastructure-replacement approach. Along with the local utility workers, tens of thousands of electrical workers from 29 states, DC and Canada poured into the region to begin the work. Various WESCO/Anixter employees were onsite from the beginning of September until early November assisting the utility customer, contractors and linemen.

As soon as they were allowed, over 80 WESCO/Anixter employees were deployed to the region to assist with the logistics of the rebuild. Personnel certified in equipment, operation, safety functions and trained in material handling went to work. They provided transmission laydown yard management and coordination of services including heavy lift and crane operations, site safety coordination, sanitation, lighting, hydration, site maintenance, garbage collection and temporary facilities including CONEX's and office trailers. The WESCO/Anixter team acted as the third-party logistics coordinator for all laydown yard services for onsite personnel, including crane operation, inbound receiving of materials, inventory documentation, inventory reporting, organization of inventory at each site, along with picking/pulling/packing of materials and preparing them for shipment to the construction sites. WESCO also utilized local branches in Lafayette and Hammond, LA to assist with materials coordination.



The WESCO/Anixter procurement team worked with suppliers from throughout the industry to ensure sourcing and delivery of essential supplies to keep the rebuild moving.



Commitment to Safety

With safety always a priority to the WESCO/Anixter team, the pre-planned safety processes were initiated. The usual safety protocols were quickly put into place including a Site Specific Health and Safety Plan that contains emergency contacts, many prescribed plans and actions for emergency events, customer site management and WESCO management contacts. The safety plan was posted in prominent places onsite. All WESCO or customer safety requirements (whichever are more stringent) are followed.

An employee training matrix was created and maintained. This listed each individual employee and their particular trainings and certifications. This was invaluable in assigning tasks and streamlining the daily efforts. This also helped to identify employees who might have additional training needs.

Daily safety “Tailgate Meetings” were conducted which included a review of safety plans and a safety minute to keep workers focused on their own safety and well-being, as well as those around them. Daily communication, planning meetings and reporting on tasks and resources kept all stakeholders informed.

Work Behind the Scenes to Ensure Restoration Continued

While crews from the utility, other electrical workers, contractors and the WESCO/Anixter team were working on rebuilding or the logistics associated with supplies, another group of WESCO/Anixter employees was making sure that everyone was staying healthy and fed.

WESCO/Anixter management from operations, sales and projects were tasked with supplying meals and refreshments for the employees, subcontractors and customer personnel working in the laydown yards. On a daily basis, these roving patrols would make their way to one of the main camps that had been established by the utility customer. These camps supplied mess halls where meals would be prepared and in many cases packaged for delivery to those in the field.



With the area experiencing suffocating temperatures and heat index values reaching 110° in the days following the hurricane, working conditions could quickly become dangerous. The WESCO/Anixter management team kept coolers stocked with water, ice and Gatorade at all of the laydown sites and made sure these were replenished, as needed. Keeping the crew properly hydrated was the first priority. Roving patrols went from site to site to make sure that any supplies that might be needed by the workers were delivered – including first aid supplies, bug spray, rainwear, office and safety supplies, etc.

Large man camps were set up and supplied with all of the essentials that a construction worker might need. This included shower and sleeping trailers and a laundry tent. WESCO/Anixter crews stayed together at a campground that had also sustained storm damage of its own. The sewer and water systems were functional, but not the electrical system. WESCO purchased a 45kW towable diesel generator from a local rental company to power the trailers. A local electrician was tasked with establishing a makeshift electrical distribution system with temporary cabling to be used with the generator. All of the camp trailers for the crew were powered using this system for the duration of their efforts.

At one point during these efforts, a second storm threatened the area and evacuation was implemented. This meant securing the sites, finding alternative lodging, evacuating and re-mobilizing to resume the work.

Supply Chain Management is an Essential Part of any Disaster Recovery



Optimizing pre-existing relationships, resources and systems prior to a disaster or emergency helps impacted communities recover more quickly and effectively. No single group or organization can address every aspect of such wide-ranging and complex efforts such as what it took to restore power to this region.

Pre-storm resource planning and training, dedicated stock and pre-positioning of storm inventory, customer-specific product kits ready to ship on demand, dedicated resources and employees, and post-storm material handling ensures restoration efforts can start as soon as possible.

Partnerships in Preparedness and Response are Vital

While the WESCO/Anixter teams were just beginning the integration process of combining forces between the companies at the time that Hurricane Laura hit, the combined strength between the two, exemplified phenomenal teamwork and dedication to the customers they serve.

Using a combination of planning, relationships, safety and training, as well as being fluid, flexible and collaborative, WESCO/Anixter provided this utility customer with experienced recovery and rebuilding assistance.

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