



TACTICOMM

FROM HOWARD TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS



SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2013 AT 5:15 PM, THE LANDSCAPE OF OAK GROVE, HATTIESBURG, AND PETAL, MISSISSIPPI CHANGED FOREVER.

As residents and visitors of the community took shelter in their homes and businesses, an EF4 tornado was raging through the heart of the Pine Belt leaving a path of destruction in its wake. Little did we know that one of our very own employees would be fighting for her life as the tornado demolished her home.



According to Howard employee, Jordon Williams, “It happened so fast. Even though the sirens had been going off all day, you never really expect your house to get hit, so we were really caught off guard. Then, when our roof blew off, we could see all the debris flying around us and there were things falling on us—those were definitely the scariest few seconds in my life.”



The next morning revealed the true extent of this disaster. It was major—leaving residents without homes, cars and something we all take for granted, a way to communicate with family and friends. Howard Technology Solutions bridged this communications gap in the following days by establishing and maintaining a Tacticomm Command Post. Tacticomm is Howard’s Mobile Command and Communications Vehicle, specifically designed to address the needs associated with emergency situations and public safety management.

Monday, February 11th, Howard Technology Solutions’ Professional Services Team



went to work. Members Matthew Mauldin, Brian Stroka, Andy Roberts, David Emory, and David Rochelle arrived in Hattiesburg, Mississippi and set up operations at the corner of Pearl Street and 24th Avenue, where Williams' home was completely destroyed just two blocks from the University of Southern Mississippi. The HTS Tacticomm unit provided area residents with essential communication services, along with bottled water and snacks.

For three days in Hattiesburg, and one in Petal, Tacticomm was deployed as a WiFi Hotspot, VoIP phone communications hub, and charging station for electronic equipment. By utilizing a Xirrus Access Point, HTS was able to provide wireless access to a 4-block area, enabling residents to communicate via phones, laptops, and computers that had escaped damage from the storm. Some residents sat on their front porches, while others were able to stay inside secured areas of their homes and access the Tacticomm Hotspot.

Area residents came by each day to charge their cell phones and laptops, enabling them to make calls and watch movies before going to bed—activities that they said provided a measure of normalcy and boosted morale after the devastating effects of the storm.

One resident said “Being cut off from the outside world is scary, but with the assistance Howard has given us today, I have been able to notify my friends and family in other states through social media and let them know that my wife and I are ok.

Reflecting on everything that has happened since that day, Williams said, “Howard has been like a family to me. Everyone who came out with Tacticomm can't be thanked enough, especially Andy Roberts, who helped find my dog Marley. They have helped me get back on my feet and I will be forever grateful.”

Marley's story

Bad weather frightens dogs, too. Jordon Williams' two Blue Pitbulls, Marley and Tiny, are no exception. The day of the tornado, the dogs seemed particularly nervous, according to Williams. So when a tree crashed into their room at the back of the house, the dogs' immediate reaction was to run and hide. A terrified Tiny hid inside one of the damaged walls and was found almost immediately, but Marley panicked and bolted from the house. Despite reports that neighbors had seen Marley, Williams and friends searched for days without a single sighting. She was worried; not only was Marley her baby, but she was also pregnant!

Finally—five days after Marley had gone missing—Andy Roberts, a Howard Pro Services team member, heard a low growl coming from inside what used to be Williams' home. Sure enough, it was Marley. Moments later, she and her owner were reunited. Marley was a little thinner and still shaky, but obviously happy to be back with her family. “I don't know where she was all that time, but it is so great to have her back,” said Williams, adding “We can replace all the things we lost. but we could never replace her.”

About TACTICOMM

Tacticomm is Howard's new mobile command and communications solution for emergency response and public safety management. It provides solutions suitable for small-scale daily operational activities and major mobilizations alike, from single components to complete mobile communication packages.

Learn more at <http://bit.ly/pr-tacticomm>



HOWARD[™]
TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS

TACTICOMM

PHONE | (888) 912-3151

www.howardcomputers.com/tacticomm