

Hurricane Sandy Recovery - The New Normal for the Jersey Shore

Sam Rosania, Executive Vice President

Rostan Solutions, LLC

3433 Lithia Pinecrest Road, Ste. 287

Valrico, FL 33596

Tel: (813)-505-1313; Email:srosania@rostan.com

Abstract

Following Hurricane Sandy, New Jersey Boroughs, Townships, Cities and Counties were faced with a “new” normal within just a few hours of the storm. Unlike snowstorms and nor’easters, Super Storm Sandy wreaked havoc along the Jersey Shore not seen in generations. The challenges that followed and continue today were more challenging than anything experienced in a lifetime. Significant short-term and long-term challenges are a result of the storm surge and flood damage that occurred along the Atlantic coast and in the bays, rivers and streams. Specific short-term challenges included emergency protective measures, emergency procurement, debris and sand removal, damaged infrastructure repair and budgetary implications. Long-term challenges include dealing with the effects of new Flood Insurance Rate Maps and cost of living implications, long-term township tax base and budget implications, identifying and prioritizing capital projects, and finding and maximizing additional funding sources to supplement the townships budget.

Rostan worked closely with numerous Jersey Shore communities to assist them with their short-term response and recovery and with their long-term recovery and mitigation program. Helping them find solutions for many of the challenges they are facing, such as recovering their eligible FEMA reimbursement disaster costs and assisting them obtain grant funds for damaged and vulnerable infrastructure.

This session will elaborate on the challenges outlined above and will provide a series of “take-aways” to help other communities be better prepared to respond and recover to a similar disaster. The session will close with suggestions regarding the prioritization of planning, exercising, mitigation measures and communicating their value to the public and decision makers.

1. Introduction

The presentations approach is from the utility manager and public official perspective. The aim is to identify the common pitfalls encountered during planning, responding and recovering from a hurricane or similar incident. The presentation will provide:

An Overview of Effective Strategies;

Case Study Examples;

Planning Considerations; and

Federal Funding and Reimbursement Opportunities.

2. Objectives

The primary objectives of the presentation are to provide the participants with the necessary information to:

Develop an understanding of what it really takes to be prepared for any disaster

Provide a methodology that can be utilized to prepare, respond and recover

Understand the importance of strategic planning as it relates to critical infrastructure, asset management and disaster debris management

Develop long-term plans for infrastructure stability and sustainability.

3. Analysis

An emergency by definition implies an unforeseen event but planning for key scenarios can make all the difference. When a disaster strikes, the last thing you want is to worry about insurance claims and lining up the right people to help with cleanup efforts. Coastal communities have the toughest task of minimizing risk since an impending hurricane can wreak havoc along the coastline. The complex strategies involved in rebuilding after a disaster cannot be made during the chaos that follows.

Pre-disaster planning begins with the development of an emergency response and/or mitigation strategy – a mechanism that combines local policy with state initiatives and funding sources. Optimally, it includes an independent assessment of vulnerability and methodology for pre- and post-disaster activities, and serves primarily as a vehicle for securing funding for redevelopment after disaster strikes, and aiding in allocation of limited resources. Having post-disaster plans in place before a disaster strikes allows agencies to respond more efficiently, minimizing damage and possibly saving lives. By reducing the number of decisions required to implement actions, planning speeds up the recovery process.

4. Discussion

The strategies address the key issues that face a utility when preparing, responding and recovering from a disaster. We look at the challenges from an administrative, engineering/operational, and financial perspective providing examples from past experiences of the challenges, mistakes and lessons learned from previous disaster events drawing from various case studies associated with public works/ESF3 operations following catastrophic disasters.

5. Conclusion

We will introduce participants to various debris management and damage assessment procedures, as well as, introduce the participants to pertinent federal regulations for financial reimbursements and grants and aid.