

What segment of the school community poses the best avenue for sustainability of energy programs in the future? The answer is the students. Integrating energy facts and efficiency issues into the presentation of every subject taught will provide the students the background and understanding of the importance of energy efficiency and its impact on their daily lives.

Education and energy awareness training for an energy management program is like the mortar used to bind the bricks and blocks together in an educational building. Without it, the program has no foundation and the program's success is questionable. Education is key to the success of the program and for the well-being of the students, teachers, and staff.

Get Started

Building, maintaining, and operating energy-efficient schools today are essential for the future of our nations, communities, and students. If you do not begin today with an energy management program, you are mortgaging the future of your children and your grandchildren. If you do not start now, when will you start? 🏠

References:

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Xavier University of Louisiana during Hurricane Katrina

COPING WITH CRISIS: Members Respond to HURRICANE Aftermath

by Ruth E. Thaler-Carter

Campus facilities managers have been proving their worth and showing their stripes over the past few months, as they continue to respond to a hugely disorienting swath of weather-inflicted damage at member campuses across the U.S. Gulf Coast.

We are relieved to report that, at press time for this issue of *Facilities Manager*, APPA has not heard of any members who have been seriously injured or killed as a result of Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, or Wilma. However, several campuses have been greatly damaged and will not recover until at least the first 2006 semester, if not longer. APPA members affected by these terrible events have been responding with great courage, as well as laudable creativity. Here are some of their stories, and some resources for those needing assistance or wishing to help.

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Tales of Terror

Almost as soon as Hurricane Katrina first hit the New Orleans area, APPA's network of colleagues was in touch with members. The Southeastern Region set up a special listserv in response to the disaster, giving concerned colleagues a way to check on affected members and those in the eye of the storm a way to communicate with each other whenever possible.

Marion Bracy, director of facilities at Xavier University in the heart of New Orleans and now president of the APPA's Southeastern Region, had to leave New Orleans and take refuge with his brother in Dallas, Texas, with his wife and two daughters when Hurricane Katrina struck. That was not until he made sure that students on his campus were safe though.

"We had already started classes," he recalled. "Finding kids proved to be difficult—we didn't have a good count. We got as many buses as we could to get people out (Grambling State and Southern universities provided buses), but there were 250 to 300 students who didn't find out about that service, so I brought in staff—including my wife—and we just buckled down. We were rescued by boat, and then we were constantly at the Student Center. We would take gigantic cans of food to the nuns nearby, who had power and warmed up the food for us. Then we'd go back to the dorms by boat with the hot food, so our students had at least one hot meal every day."

For Karen Henley, director of facilities maintenance at Tulane University, Hurricane Katrina was a textbook exercise in crisis control—and a moving reminder of the importance of networking with colleagues. She was evacuated twice—to Jackson, Mississippi, and to Houston, Texas. She returned to her campus at the end of September. Sylvester Johnson, associate vice president of facilities services at Tulane, has been "on the ground" in New Orleans throughout most of the chaos.

"It's been incredible, but we're all OK," Henley said. "We set up 1-800 numbers and a website to find our employees.



The Xavier campus after flood waters receded. Parts of the campus were under 8 feet of water.



Mold overtakes a computer lab at Xavier; note the high-water mark.

We were able to locate most of our people. Our Nextel radios were lifesavers.”

Inspiring colleagues throughout the hurricane and related weather were Tulane’s senior management, Henley noted. “We had people who stayed through the hurricane, including our president and CIO, at a command post. Some left, but came back. We had to get them helicoptered out eventually—we hired a private company for that. Just getting people to safety was a challenge.”

Evacuating had its own challenges: “There were four days without cable, so we had no idea how bad things were in New Orleans,” she said. Like several other schools in the region, Tulane already had students on campus when the bad weather hit. “On August 27, we had freshman opening day,” Henley said. “We were saying, ‘Welcome—and leave.’ The president met with parents to ask them to take their students back if they could.”

Byron Patterson, director of physical plant at Southeastern Louisiana University/Hammond, went to his office and slept on the floor there at some points, because “we didn’t have any air conditioning at home” and parts of his campus at least had generator power. He “went out, drove around and found our people in their homes,” he recalled. “I had them take radios home so we could communicate.”

Many emotional moments were experienced through the SRAPPA listserv including:

- Mike Durham, Louisiana State University/Baton Rouge: “LSU at Baton Rouge came through the hurricane without any damage. We are hosting a special needs shelter, and temporary medical triage/transfer activities. Our assembly center has been turned into a 250-bed temporary hospital. We have all available housing being used to support FEMA, Homeland Security, FBI, Public Health Service, and other agencies. Our track stadium has been turned into a helicopter landing site, operating 24 hours to bring refugees out of the affected area. Our fieldhouse is now a special needs shelter full of very sick people. Between 300 and 400 patients. We operated a hospital and a med school/research facility in New Orleans. We have students

whose families have moved in with them in the dorms and apartments. This is naturally causing some new and interesting ‘problems,’ especially in coed dorms. I spent the day on the water in New Orleans in my old boat (with at least one rat for company) along with a volunteer. The area I was searching was covered in water. It has given new meaning to the old song, ‘Do you know what it is to miss New Orleans.’ Everyone is doing all they can to save lives and take care of people.”

- Rawn Davis, Xavier University: “I was able to move to Baldwin, Louisiana, with my wife, mother, and son. We thank you all for your prayers and support and ask you to keep all of the people in the N.O. area in your prayers. We have a true friend in the SRAPPA and APPA Community.”
- Byron Patterson, SLU/Hammond: “I am very proud of my team. We brought (the) campus back and have a lot of stories about tremendous people who have kept this campus running. Our structure is very fragile at this point. I have just a skeleton staff here since a lot of people have lost their homes. Let’s talk about being blessed ... about the quality of people that I work for: The president’s wife washed my clothes for me because we have been working around the clock. I do not think there is another president’s wife who would do that.”

Coping with the Damage

Hurricane damage was one thing, and bad enough; after-effects are another, and in some places, even worse.

“We’re right in the heart of New Orleans, and had some wind damage to a number of buildings, but the real problem is that 95 percent of our buildings had flood water that stayed there for 10 to 14 days—we’re just now pumping the water out and starting remediation,” said Xavier’s Bracy. “We could have coped with the exterior damage, but the water did us in. Mold has covered everything—the water got to at least the first floor of every building. It’s ridiculous. The waters reached the third floor of our new University Center. The library is badly affected—we will lose a lot of books.” Some buildings were under eight feet of water.

One heartbreaking aspect for Xavier, Bracy noted, is that “we were close to setting a record for number of students on

campus this year, because of our new dorm building. We had to tell kids to go home.”

Even getting insurance adjusters to the campus to assess damage and start the process of paying for repairs and remediation has been a challenge because “everyone is affected,” Bracy said, so the demand for onsite assessments is competitive.

In early October, Xavier still had no water or power; Bracy and his staff were using generators “where we can” and lots of manual labor to tear out soggy carpet, pull down sodden wallpaper, clear fallen trees and anything else they could tackle on their own.

At press time, Bracy was still going back and forth from Dallas, with other staff operating from Houston, Atlanta, and communities around New Orleans. “People can’t really go back yet—there’s nowhere to stay, nowhere to eat, nowhere to get a flat tire fixed,” he said. “There are still problems with the 504 area code—you still can’t receive phone calls much of the time. And we’ve all taken a battery of shots—tetanus, hepatitis, etc. We still have to do testing on the soil all over campus. Our goal is to reopen in January of 2006, although we’re leaving some of that up to the academics. It’s a difficult situation, but I’m proud of our crew and I’m sure we’ll meet our goal.”

Tulane has been in the headlines extensively, but the facilities stance on the hurricane is unique. “Our first call was to APPA’s Mike White at Miami University” said Henley. “Our connections in APPA have been great—APPA members have been our lifeline throughout this crisis.”

Having more than one location has worked in Tulane’s favor. “We have several different campuses, so we plan to hold our second semester by using those resources, but our whole first semester is gone,” said Henley. “We should be reopening in Biloxi, Mississippi, in October, for mini-semesters there, and some of our New Orleans off sites should be functional. Our football team is still playing games—they usually play in the Super Dome, so they’re playing all away games. We’re not using the word ‘normal’ any more, but we’re trying to keep a sense of order.”

Tulane is using “a lot of generators” and was fortunate to have a cogen plant “which helped,” when the city still had no power. “We had wind damage at one or two buildings, but no major structural damage.”

One important factor in Tulane’s favor was an existing, functional emergency plan. “We keep a core team on campus and have had dress rehearsals for a crisis,” said Henley. “We have buses available through a charter company, with a plan to evacuate to Jackson, Mississippi; we have a wonderful relationship with Jackson State, too. We have an away team—we moved them to our executive MBA program and campus in Houston. Contractors actually met with us there, so we could start repairs.” That did not last long though. “Then we had to leave Houston—we started calling ourselves ‘Tulane—the roaming university!’”

At Southeastern, “we had a significant amount of damage—but we have an incredible team who worked on it, putting in 12 to 14 hours a day starting the night after Katrina hit,” Patterson said. “We were without power for several days, but kept everything running with generators—the food center, a command center. Finding diesel (for the generators) was difficult, but we offered to trade the National Guard hot meals for fuel. There was an amazing amount of bartering going on!”

Just getting on and around campus was difficult. “About 60 oak and pine trees came down across the roads, so you couldn’t even get around. We had a team come in to do cutting and hauling.”

In addition to physical damage and debris, “roof panels flew off, doors blew in.” Patterson had about 300 students who remained on campus, along with faculty and essential personnel, all needing shelter and supplies. One thing worked in their favor: “We had two unused dorm buildings we were going to tear down, because we had built new ones, so we put about 1,200 people in there, including tree-cutters, electricity workers, etc.,” he said. The campus ended up hosting about 350 Homeland Security people along with 300 to 600 National Guard members; FEMA also showed up. Every detail was tricky. “We had to replace our contractors and shuffle food around.” But there was another positive aspect: “We were blessed—we had water and natural gas throughout.”

Even moments of progress created drawbacks. Once things seemed to start quieting down, “We got about 100 trucks and dedicated ourselves to getting power back,” Patterson said. “At one point, we had the campus back up and we were the only place in the area with power, so we had a lot of people migrating to the campus. There was some vandalizing, so we had to up the police presence.”

Just as the power aspect seemed to be under control, “the power company phased a lot of equipment and we blew an underground loop in the electrical system. We had to find the problem and reroute everything,” said Patterson. The campus cooling towers ended up “chockfull of trash and debris, so we had to strip those down.”

Things are looking much better at Southeastern by now. “We started school back a week after the hurricane hit, and had a football game,” Patterson said. “We’re trying to get people’s minds off their troubles and back to normalcy. The campus is up and operational. We expect 1,500 to 2,000 additional students from other schools, and we’ll handle them.”

All in all, “it was a remarkable effort,” Patterson said. “I’m so proud of our people. The president and administration have been amazing, too. It’s been an extraordinary time. And it’s proof that you can throw us facilities managers in an alligator pit and we’ll have ‘em sorted by size, shape, and color by the end of the day!”

An Object Lesson

Among the object lessons to be learned from these experiences is to make every effort to have insurance in place, as