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Company of the Month: Your New England disaster recovery team - BELFOR Property Restoration

May 31, 2012 - Owners Developers & Managers

Mobilization and response to the 2002 Texas floods, 2004 California earthquake, and 2005 Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, positioned BELFOR Property Restoration as the global industry leader in disaster recovery and emergency response. In 2006, with more than 70 response centers operating in the U.S., BELFOR turned its attention to the Northeast. "We already responded to national clients with facilities in New England, but were determined to establish a local full-service facility to serve the entire region" said Daryl Tunno, a regional manager based in Philadelphia. "We decided to build a team of experienced professionals ready for the challenge of bringing an industry leader with more expansive capabilities into a market saturated with franchises and small independents. And we started by hiring the general manager, Gerry McGonagle." A licensed construction supervisor, McGonagle brought knowledge in construction and specialized recovery methods, as well as an understanding of insurance claims, management, and sales. A team of pros was soon hired, a building procured, and BELFOR Boston opened for business in March 2007.

Retailer back in business after fire: Twelve days before Thanksgiving 2008, fire, smoke and water damaged the landmark Back Bay location of a national retailer. Fearing a lost holiday shopping season, the retailer issued a challenge to BELFOR Boston - open the store in time for Black Friday, the busiest shopping day of the year. A BELFOR recovery team was quickly assembled and specialists working around the clock dried, cleaned and deodorized the store's four levels. With store staff assistance, BELFOR sorted and cleaned salvageable merchandise. Working with municipal code officials, mechanics quickly assessed the store's damaged systems including ventilation, electrical, fire detection and sprinklers, elevators and escalators - and then repaired them. Specialists restored the security and point of purchase systems. When the final coat of paint was applied on the day before Thanksgiving, BELFOR had beaten the deadline by 24 hours. Senior project manager, Corey Massaro, recalled that "nobody believed we could do it, even the insurance adjuster, who was looking at paying a substantial business interruption claim. We made money for the store, saved money for the insurance company, and everyone made it home for the holiday."

Families back to normal after the tornadoes: In June 2011, western Massachusetts residents were stunned by the impact of EF3 tornadoes that tore through the Pioneer Valley, killing three people and leaving hundreds homeless. BELFOR quickly deployed to the area as part of a team of direct repair providers established through a national insurance company's emergency response program. "People were in shock" said senior project manager Jason Camerano. "In a matter of minutes, a family's whole life - their home, vehicles and personal possessions - were damaged or destroyed. We did our best to relieve some of their worries." BELFOR crews removed trees from homes, temporarily covered and boarded roofs and windows for security, and removed possessions to BELFOR's secure facility for cleaning and storage. "As we finished the last of the rebuilding

projects," says Camerano, "it was satisfying to see the relief and joy that moving home brought the families. What we do really is about people getting back to normal."

Irreplaceable research materials carefully restored: From housing and classrooms to collections and laboratories, university damage recovery often requires drawing on several special skills at the same time. BELFOR's restoration of the Tulane University campus after Hurricane Katrina was a monumental achievement, but restorations of valuable collections are done by BELFOR operations around the country, including New England. When a broken pipe within a prestigious local university's botanic institute damaged a specimen archive during a 2010 holiday break, the conservator called BELFOR Boston, concerned that the collection was a total loss. BELFOR carefully conducted restoration trials using several methods. BELFOR and the conservator jointly decided that using vacuum freeze-dry technology would provide the best solution to stabilize, dry and restore the hundreds of wet and irreplaceable documents, books, artwork and specimens.

In a case study published by the university, a senior research scientist said "We were so pleased at how well the specimens were handled by BELFOR. None of the specimens showed any signs of physical damage, so we know they were handled with care."

No interruptions at Intensive Care Unit: Patients with compromised immune systems in medical centers and long-term/chronic care facilities must be protected from health and safety hazards such as spread of dust, mold spores and infectious materials. In the winter of 2012, a facility manager at a world-renowned Boston medical center called BELFOR Boston after a concealed water leak in an ICU resulted in mold growth in the walls. He asked BELFOR if it were possible to remediate the damage while 24-hour patient care continued.

General manager McGonagle said, "Special risk assessments were conducted and BELFOR quickly developed a work plan to prevent these vulnerable patients from accidental exposure." Using sophisticated containment and engineered controls, surgery and treatment schedules continued uninterrupted while BELFOR successfully conducted damage recovery work and repairs nearby.

BELFOR CEO Sheldon Yellen reminds his employees, "Realizing it's not only what we do that's important but how we do it - we are committed to serving our communities, before, during and after a disaster. From our social responsibility to protect the environment, to donating supplies, and to hosting emergency preparedness seminars, BELFOR cares." The local BELFOR N.E. team has taken this commitment to heart by supporting numerous causes including the Worcester Firefighter Memorial 6K, National MS Society Ride, Boston Fire Department's Burn Foundation, several Veterans groups, as well as hosting educational seminars.

BELFOR N.E. has continued to grow to meet regional demand. A Nashua, N.H. operations center opened in spring 2011, and recently the Boston operation relocated to a larger facility in Marlborough. Whether a team of 3 or a force of 300 is required to respond to an event, BELFOR N.E. is ready. McGonagle said, "We are here 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year - wherever and whenever you need us. It's the BELFOR promise."