

# Impact

The Insurance  
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## Tornadoes and Hurricanes and Wildfires — Oh, My!

In 2011, the U.S. was faced with many challenges from Mother Nature. Spring tornadoes ravaged the South and Midwest. Hurricane Irene was a powerful Atlantic hurricane that left extensive flood and wind damage along its path through the East Coast. Just two months later a rare October blizzard pummeled the same areas while roaring wildfires raced through rain-starved farm and ranchland in Texas, destroying more than 1,500 homes.

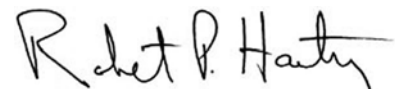
In this issue, we highlight the insurance industry's efforts following these devastating events. In addition to the activation of claims personnel and catastrophe teams, you'll read about the Allstate agency owners that rushed to collect school supplies and Chartis' Dollars for Denim Days dedicated to raising funds for disaster relief. We also feature articles on the reassurance of USAA's "blue shirts" and the American Family agent who had to dig through rubble to unearth his computer server and backup drive that had all his policyholders' information. The Hartford was part of unique experience when one of its property claims professionals participated in an aerial survey of Connecticut to help identify and understand the key areas of impact following Irene. And a team of volunteers from Swiss Re went to a 40-acre field on the outskirts of Joplin, Missouri, to clear the field of storm debris.

Following the wildfire outbreak in Bastrop County, Texas, State Farm put its catastrophe claims specialists to work and also held a wildfire relief donation drive and made donations to local volunteer fire departments. From Tuscaloosa to Joplin to Irene, State Auto had an unprecedented number of cat teams on the ground and pulled together to deliver on its promise to its customers. And Nationwide proved that whether it's handing out bottled water and other supplies to storm victims, or donating money to the Red Cross' disaster relief fund, its humanitarian response is as important to its promise as its claims response.

Lockton Associates teamed up with a recovery group rebuilding homes in Joplin. 140 Lockton volunteers went to Joplin to rebuild homes for two families in need. The Joplin tornado left a medical center heavily damaged, and its employees unsure of their futures. MetLife harnessed its talents and resources and touched many lives in the community. And thanks to the proactive communications and preparations made by GEICO's CAT team, many of Irene's claims were settled within days after the storm.

Finally, I toured the tornado-devastated areas in Tuscaloosa and was pleased to present a check to Mayor Walt Maddox at City Hall.

This year's devastation proves once again that insurers are the nation's economic first responders, helping people and communities recover from the unimaginable. At the same time, insurers are made up of people who live and work in these same communities, always willing to lend a neighbor a helping hand in their time of greatest need.



Robert P. Hartwig, Ph.D., CPCU  
 President, Insurance Information Institute

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# Rebuilding Hope in Joplin

Joplin, Missouri, residents call Meagan Snider one of the heroes of the tornado that devastated a seven-mile swath of this southwest Missouri community. Snider and a fellow manager at a Freddy's frozen custard restaurant herded 20 people into the bathrooms just before the EF-5 tornado slammed into the building. The restaurant blew away. Everyone inside survived.

Amy and Larry Jump scrambled for cover in the basement of their Joplin home with their three young sons, praying to survive. They huddled under a blanket. When the storm passed, their home, and all their neighbors' homes, were gone. Amy Jump says, "I thank God every day that he kept all of us safe in our little corner."

These are just two of the thousands of stories from the Joplin disaster that left 8,000 buildings dam-

aged and killed 162 people. But that's not the end of their story. It's just the beginning.

Kansas City, Missouri-based Lockton raced to provide immediate assistance in the aftermath. Two associates who are Certified Emergency Responders volunteered for emergency and search-and-rescue duty. Hundreds of Lockton Associates nationally donated money and transported baby supplies and bottled water to help families who had lost everything. But Lockton Associates also wanted to provide long-term help.

"We asked, and they told us they needed support for rebuilding homes," said Mark Henderson, Chief Operating Officer of Lockton's Kansas City Property Casualty operations. "Our people are do-ers, so they jumped right in."

On Oct. 27, 140 Lockton volun-

teers loaded buses for the three-hour trip to Joplin to rebuild homes for Meagan Snider and the Jump family.

Lockton teamed up with Relief Spark, a recovery group that set a goal of rebuilding 50 Joplin homes in 50 months. They also teamed with Clark Baxter of Sustainable Design in Dana Point, California. Baxter designed sustainable homes for Snider and the Jumps using Structural Insulated Panel construction techniques.

The Lockton volunteers started with bare concrete slabs and three long days later had completed exterior walls on both homes along part of the interior framing. Other volunteer groups and contractors working with Relief Spark and the families are completing the homes. Snider and the Jump family were expected to move in by Thanksgiving.

"I'm so excited just to see every-

**Below: Amy and Larry Jump's three sons who survived the May 22 tornado in a corner of the basement of their home. Right: Lockton volunteers paint a new playground for Emerson Elementary students. Bottom Right: Meagan Snider and friend Jeff Malley as plans for her rebuilt home take shape around her.**

Photos courtesy of Lockton.





Lockton volunteers tilt the first form into position at the Meagan Snider home during a three-day rebuild in Joplin, Missouri.



thing put together,” said Snider. “I’ll be going home soon. It’s amazing, really cool. I don’t even know how to describe it.”

Amy Jump is also excited to have a real home for her husband and three sons. “You guys got a great start on it for us!,” she told the Lockton volunteers. “Thanks again for all you guys did for us. We wouldn’t be where we are now without you. It’s looking more and more like a home every day.”

Lockton also adopted four classrooms at Emerson Elementary, temporarily housed at Duquesne Elementary, in an area nearby largely unharmed by the storm.

Jeanette Mausolf of Lockton helped lead a team of volunteers to create a better playground at the school. “It just really touched me that we can be here and help them,” Mausolf said.

“I was so thrilled to see them this morning,” said Susan Flowers, the physical education teacher for Joplin Public Schools coordinating the playground project. “The volunteers have come up with such cool ideas and have made it so colorful. They’re doing a fabulous job with it.”

Lockton volunteers also installed siding on a house being rebuilt on Joplin’s Kentucky Avenue and handled demolition on another house nearby.

Lockton clients also supported the project with U-Haul providing trailers, Pizza Hut making a special delivery, and Bordner Roofing donating materials and supplies.

“Joplin is a remarkable story of hope,” said Sara Harper, Lockton’s Community Relations Specialist who coordinated the three-day project. “It is humbling and rewarding to be a part of that story.” ■

# Caring for Communities

**B**rad Grupe, an Allied Insurance sales manager in Missouri, sent a passionate plea following the deadly tornado that leveled Joplin, Missouri, on May 22, 2011.

“The devastation here is truly as bad as it looks on TV,” Grupe wrote in an e-mail sent to Allied agencies. “The major needs right now within the city are for manpower to dig out of the mess, along with clean water and sanitary items.”

Grupe told Allied agencies near Joplin where policyholders could find Nationwide-branded humanitarian aid stations. He urged agents to send anyone who needed supplies. Allied Insurance, a Nationwide Insurance-owned company, organized the humanitarian and catastrophe response in the aftermath of the Joplin tornado.

“The losses were just devastating. Not only did people lose their homes and belongings, but most have also lost a family member, a friend or an acquaintance,” said Courtney Stroud, a field claims specialist with Allied Insurance. “They can’t even believe

that they are sitting with us discussing this situation.”

Whether it’s handing out bottled water, snacks and other supplies to storm victims, or donating money to the Red Cross’ disaster relief fund, Nationwide’s humanitarian response is as important to its On Your Side® promise as its claims response.

As part of Nationwide’s humanitarian response, associates hand out items such as bottled water, granola bars, cleaning supplies, diapers, baby formula, and more — offering whatever help they can.

“We had some people who just wanted a hug,” said Jackie Johnson, a Nationwide associate in the North Carolina Region. Johnson was among several associates manning aid stations in Sandford, North Carolina, after a string of tornadoes struck the state in April.

“Others stop by because they just wanted to talk about what was happening,” added Johnson. “Nothing like this had ever happened to them before.”

Nationwide is often among the first

insurance companies in the area after a catastrophe — sometimes setting up shop before social service organizations arrive. That’s because Nationwide’s humanitarian response is coordinated closely with its claims response, says Ramon Jones, associate vice president of the Southern States Region.

“We don’t have to recreate the wheel after each storm,” said Jones.

In fact, having a plan in place made mobilizing a humanitarian response to last spring’s tornadoes easier. Following the string of tornadoes which struck Tuscaloosa and Birmingham, Alabama, Jones had a team of associates assembled within 24 hours.

“It was amazing how quickly associates volunteered. It’s impressive to know people care that much and are willing to go out and help people who are in need,” said Jones.

A team of volunteers booked hotel rooms, purchased supplies to hand out at a local Sam’s Club, and was on the ground helping affected communities just days after the tornado.

And that’s the point of our

Photos courtesy of Nationwide.



**Nationwide sets up shop after tornadoes ravaged North Carolina last spring.**



Tents and tables are set up; Associates stand ready to hand out supplies to storm victims.

humanitarian response, according to Tanya Gentry, staff operations director in the Northeastern States Region — to provide immediate relief to the community while Nationwide’s claims associates work with policyholders to process claims.

Gentry helped coordinate humanitarian efforts following Hurricane Irene. Associates set up a staging area of the Northeastern States regional office in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, days before the hurricane made landfall. Then, teams of associates deployed to the hardest hit areas, setting up stations in New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Vermont and Pennsylvania.

Nationwide works closely with its agents to determine areas with the most need. Tents and tables are often set up in parking lots outside of agents’ offices and outside of large shopping centers. The stations are promoted to the community through local media, Facebook and Twitter.

“We’re there for anyone who needs help — not just our policyholders,” said Gentry. “After Hurricane Irene, we were the first insurance company to provide aid. Many people were surprised to see us out there so quickly.”

Associates also take bags of supplies to residents who might not be able to make it to one of the aid stations. Sales Manager Doug Penley and

Agent Michael Okoli were among several associates handing out water and supplies to families working to clean up their homes.

“Many people drove by, rolled down their car windows and thanked us for being there,” said Penley. “I’m very proud of how we, as a company, respond to the community.”

Jay Rabon, director of sales operations in the North Carolina Region, was one of several other associates going door-to-door with supplies. Like the aid stations, bags of supplies go to anyone who needs them, regardless of their insurance carrier.

“It’s not about what insurance company you insure your home with. It’s about what happened,” said Rabon. “Helping people is what energizes me. It’s why I work in insurance.”

Nationwide associates helped communities rebound from the spring tornadoes and Hurricane Irene by donating blood to the Red Cross. After Hurricane Irene, community blood centers canceled dozens of blood drives along the east coast and postponed future drives due to storm damage, creating a shortfall in blood donations of more than 2,000 units.

Nationwide associates helped the Red Cross meet the growing need by donating blood at local blood centers. It’s easy for associates in the company’s home office to donate with an on-site donation center.



The Nationwide Insurance Foundation also donated funds to the Red Cross’ Disaster Relief Fund following the storms. In 2011, the foundation donated \$1.65 million for disaster relief.

“We know that the American Red Cross puts our funds to good use by providing immediate assistance to people whose lives were devastated by these catastrophes,” said Chad Jester, president of the Nationwide Insurance Foundation.

The total includes \$450,000 donated to the Disaster Relief Fund in the days following the spring tornadoes in North Carolina and the South. Another \$150,000 was donated to support flood victims in New York and Pennsylvania following Hurricane Irene.

For associates on the front lines, it’s about helping people get back on their feet.

“These catastrophes were devastating for entire communities,” said Jones. “It’s much bigger than just settling our policyholders’ claims. It’s about how we care about them — and their neighbors — from day one.” ■

# Delivering in the Face of Historic Destruction

**A**s a result of spring storms, most insurance companies were hit with an astounding number of claims, making it a difficult quarter for both State Auto and the industry. As of late July, State Auto had handled nearly 32,000 weather-related claims. This compares to around 15,000 total, in most years. Despite the unusually high volume of claims, the service they provided delivered an extraordinary level of service for both agents and insureds. From agents whose offices were destroyed to insureds who lost their homes or businesses, State Auto associates worked around the clock to deliver peace of mind in the aftermath of these tragedies.

“At the end of the day, the only thing independent agents are selling is an insurance carriers’ opportunity to provide excellent claims service. We’ve always experienced outstanding claims service from State Auto, but their preparedness for Hurricane Irene proved to be worthy of an exceptional rating from our agency,” said Personal Lines

Coordinator Janice Truman of the Ford Agency in Hopewell, Virginia. “Their claims management team initiated an excellent channel for communication with our office. The cat crew on the ground followed through with office visits and kept us up to date on their response time to claims.”

Richard Volk of the Volks Avanti Insurance Agency said there was no way to prepare for the devastating tornado that ripped through Joplin, Missouri, in April. He’s proud, though, of the industry’s response.

“A friend from Oklahoma told me that a tornado there was the worst thing he’d ever lived through,” said Volk. “After he saw the damage in Joplin, he said it was ten times worse. You just couldn’t recognize anything after the storm. It was like rubbish run through a shredder.”

While there’s still debris to be removed, the rebuilding of the Joplin community is well underway.

“State Auto and others worked like troopers to help our insureds,” said Volk. “I think we did well as an indus-

try, overall, in responding to tragedy.”

State Auto’s response to the Joplin and Tuscaloosa, Alabama, storms began minutes after they struck. State Auto’s data team quickly provided a list of insureds in the path of a storm and State Auto call center representatives immediately began attempting to reach them by phone. Within hours, there were boots on the ground going door to door.

One of State Auto’s independent agencies in Joplin, Wayne Blackford Insurance Agency LLC, was destroyed. Immediately following the storm, State Auto took action to provide Mr. Blackford with a complete list of his policyholders and began to assist him in determining who had been affected and helped with the initial contact of

*Continued on page 24*



**Left: Claim manager Mark Chenetski and agent Don Gould discuss claims issues. Top Right: Chenetski, center, surveys the devastation with catastrophe claim representatives Kevin McBride, left, and Paul Douglas. Bottom Right: State Auto Cat team members and claim managers.**

Photos courtesy of State Auto.





## MORE STORIES FROM THE TORNADO RECOVERY EFFORTS

### Reassurance Wears a Blue Shirt

Storms change lives. They uproot. They tear down. They destroy. And it's up to a USAA blue shirt to put it back together. Mike Stephenson is a USAA adjuster from Charleston, South Carolina.

"Look at the torque on that tree," said Stephenson, bending down to inspect damage. "I would not have wanted to be in this yard." It's his job to assess the havoc wreaked by the storms in Northern Alabama and restore order to members' lives. "The good thing about it is he reassured me," said Edsel Hogan, USAA member. "It takes a lot off of me."

Edsel Hogan endured an EF-4 tornado at his house in Harvest, Alabama. The home, his wife drew up, and his father-in-law built, is uninhabitable. The road to recovery begins with Mike.

"The one thing we have to concentrate on is being a good listener," said Stephenson. "And put yourself in their shoes."

Pat Ferguson's house in Huntsville, Alabama was hit by two

storms on April 28, 2011. He was in Pennsylvania when he got the call. He rushed back the next day. "When I got here, you could imagine how upset I was," said Ferguson. "So it took me a little while to gather my wits."

Mike reassures. He measures and draws in an effort to restore the house to what it was the morning of that fateful day. "It's what we're supposed to do," said Stephenson. "It's an honor to do this for the military and their families. It really is. This is what we're supposed to be doing. This is it."

Members pay premiums year in and year out. Hoping to never meet Mike. But hoping that, if that day comes, they do.

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**Top Right: Joplin Allstate Agents Loretta Bailey and Ron Trujillo deliver school supplies collected from Allstate agents and employees. Middle: Allstate agents in Joplin present a donation and school supplies for the Joplin School District. Below Right: One of Loretta Bailey's Allstate offices was completely destroyed by the Joplin tornado.**

### Lending a Helping Hand

While Allstate's National Catastrophe Team members responded to the affected areas in Joplin, Missouri, and assisted policyholders with the claim process, Allstate agency owners and employees from the West Central Region worked on ways to rebuild the community. They started with some of Joplin's smallest citizens — its' children.

Allstate agency owners and employees in Missouri, Colorado and Kansas held various drives and began gathering school supplies almost



Photos courtesy of Allstate.



Photo courtesy of USAA

**USAA member Pat Ferguson (left) and USAA's "blue shirt" Mike Stephenson (right).**





immediately after the May disaster. In August, as students were nearing the start of school, Allstate delivered \$4,000 in school supplies and gift cards, along with an Allstate Foundation grant for \$25,000. The donation was made to Joplin's Bright Futures program.

"Our hearts go out to the Joplin community impacted by the tornado. Allstate agency owners, claims employees and National Catastrophe Team members were on the ground in Joplin immediately after the tornado, helping the community recover from this disaster," said Jeff Thompson, Allstate's West Central Region field senior vice president. "With 10 of the schools in Joplin partially or completely lost and 260 teachers without classrooms and supplies, it was very important to Allstate that we find a way to help the teachers and students rebuild and restock their classrooms. This donation is Allstate's way of helping the students in Joplin have

bright futures as they head back to school for the New Year. It builds on our long-lasting commitment to help people in time of need."

## Rebuilding Communities and Lives

**A**lmost immediately after a ferocious tornado ripped through the community of Joplin, Missouri, American Family agents, employees and claim adjusters responded to the disaster. A catastrophe vehicle was dispatched to Joplin the following day. Claim adjusters began processing claims immediately, and along with other American Family representatives, lent their support to members of the devastated community.

In addition to quickly servicing customers' claims, agents and employees helped in other ways, such as offering monetary donations and organizing school supplies and household product drives for families in the area.

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**American Family Insurance field and casualty adjusters were on the scene in Joplin within 24 hours, assisting customers who were victims of the tornado.**



Photos courtesy of American Family.



**The May 22 tornado that ripped through Joplin, Missouri, caused incredible devastation.**

While the Joplin tornado garnered the most news coverage, American Family declared and responded to 12 catastrophe operations in eight states during May.

The catastrophe team remained on the ground in Joplin through the end of July to ensure customers received the attention and care they deserved. To date, there have been 2,300 claims from the Joplin tornado and \$61.3 million paid to American Family customers.

American Family agent Derek

Holmes' office was reduced to rubble during the storm. Holmes had recently had a new external hard drive installed in his office which automatically backs up the office's customer data every evening. Called an "aircraft black box for your data" by its manufacturer, it's also designed to withstand water and fire damage.

While going through the piles of debris the following day, Holmes found

his server and the backup device between two toppled walls. The device



Photos courtesy of American Family.

was still plugged into the server. Though dusty and a bit scratched up, it had little other damage. It was taken to a nearby office in Springfield, Missouri, and an American Family technician was able to restore the data and download it to a new server in about 90 minutes.

Though the bricks and mortar of his office had been destroyed, something much more valuable — his customer data — had been quickly restored. Holmes was able to set up shop in his agency sales manager's office nearby and begin contacting customers to check on their well-being almost immediately.

## Harnessing Talents and Resources

The deadly tornado that struck Joplin, Missouri, left St. John's Regional Medical Center heavily damaged, and its employees unsure of their futures. The medical center is part of the Sisters of Mercy Health System, one of MetLife Resources' largest clients, dating back to 1996, as well as a significant MetLife Auto & Home® and National Accounts customer. For Joplin, where many of Mercy's employees live, the toll was even greater: a devastated city and the loss of more than 140 members of the community.

"Once we heard about St. John's, it was clear that many businesses from across the MetLife enterprise would mobilize to help the people of Joplin," said Tom Hogan, senior vice

president, MetLife Resources. "We knew that under these circumstances, coming together and harnessing the true power of ONE MetLife would provide the support that was needed in Joplin." A special response team was assembled, including Hogan; Greg Babineau, MetLife Resources account executive; Tim Bowen, director, Home Operations Team, MetLife Auto & Home; and other representatives from Auto & Home, National Accounts and MetLife Foundation. Working with Mercy, they were able to assess the immediate needs and coordinate on-the-ground logistics in Joplin. MetLife Auto & Home's Catastrophe Response Vehicle was deployed to Joplin to provide a base of operations for MetLife's multi-pronged response. In addition, temporary office space was secured in a local MetLife Home Loans facility, an on-the-ground team of volunteers was assembled, and Mercy's onsite command center — staffed by their human resources people and MetLife — was operational.

Every associate, regardless of which MetLife organization they represented, was briefed and prepared to answer questions and direct

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**Left: Matthew Swatek of MetLife Resources was among the associates providing support for displaced Mercy employees in the hospital's temporary command center. Below: MetLife's Catastrophe Response Vehicle on the scene in Joplin.**

Mercy employees to the appropriate resources. Throughout the Memorial Day holiday weekend, the on-site team, led by Paulette Playce, regional managing director, MetLife Resources, was available for Mercy's employees, processing requests, providing information and handing out much-needed supplies. Given the emergency situation, Mercy's employees were eligible to receive expedited processing of loans, hardship requests and annuity withdrawals, and all application fees, overnight delivery fees and surrender penalties were waived. MetLife's support touched the broader community of Joplin as well, with MetLife Foundation making a \$20,000 donation to the tornado relief fund established soon after the disaster.

"MetLife came together as one, and was able to provide support that was unified, coordinated and, most importantly, effective," said Hogan. "By harnessing the talents and resources of ONE MetLife, we were able to touch many lives in the Joplin community — when they needed us most." William Mullaney, former president of U.S. Business for MetLife, said, "During trying times, the call for help is most urgent—and the reason why we are in business most evident.

On behalf of everyone in U.S. Business and MetLife, I wish to personally thank all the individuals who have worked so hard and tirelessly sacrificed much to deliver on our promises. I firmly believe it's the caliber of our people that helps to differentiate MetLife in the marketplace, and this has clearly been demonstrated by their efforts over the past few months.

I'm incredibly proud of them and to be part of the business we're in. Our associates' selfless response inspires me and I hope it inspires you, too."



## Behind the Scenes: Tornado Claims Stories

### Erma and Horace Pate Tuscaloosa, Alabama

**T**wenty years ago, Erma and Horace Pate were affected by a small tornado. Horace Pate, to protect his family from future storms, built a tornado shelter on the property.

In April, after a tornado blew through Tuscaloosa, the Pates called their daughter, Sylvia Harper. “They said ‘please, come get us, we’re in the hole,’” she said.

“It was slapping and banging there for about a minute and then it was just gone,” said Horace.

“He looked out of the shelter and he said ‘honey, we don’t have a home,’” said Erma.

“When somebody takes out an insurance contract, it’s a promise. And when an event like this happens, it’s our job to deliver,” said Gary MacDonald, an associate general adjuster for The Hartford. “We try to do that promptly, efficiently and with compassion.”

“The first thing he did when he went back to his office was send us some money to take care of living expenses,” said Harper. “Because when they walked out that night of the tor-

nado, the only thing they had were the clothes on their back.”

“Even though the house is looking the way it currently does, it’s the last time they’ll see their house,” said MacDonald. “Tomorrow the home will be demolished. You do take that personal story with you. It’s not something the Pates wanted to have happen; it’s not something The Hartford wanted to happen. But I think at the end of the day, when this is all said and done, our hope is that the Pates will sit back and say, ‘boy, The Hartford really stepped up here.’”

### Charline and Terry West Chattanooga, Tennessee

**“I**’m based out of Chicago and on April 27th, this area of Tennessee was hit by tornados,” said Lawrence Hageman, an outside claims specialist for The Hartford. “I got a call to pack up and head out here to help out with the damages.”

Terry West is a lifelong artist who teaches once a week in the studio in his home. “When I saw a tree on the roof of my home, my source of income, I thought, ‘what am I going to do?’” he said. “I don’t have money in the bank to take that tree down. And we thought well, The Hartford, we’ve been with them a

long time and we’ve never been disappointed.”

Hageman said as soon as he gets out of the car and rings the doorbell, he starts to build a relationship, acting as a friend.

“I was blown away by the fact that I called him on a Sunday and he called me back within an hour,” said Charline.

“The Hartford has given me tools to get out here quickly, to do on-site inspections and to write up estimates and write checks for them to get them back on their feet quickly,” said Hageman. “It’s just a great feeling to help these people out and to see the looks on their faces once they know that we’re going to help get their lives back to normal.”

“Lawrence was unbelievable. We expected someone to tell us, ‘well it doesn’t need this’ and ‘the company won’t do that’ and he was just the opposite,” said Charline.

“You have a sense of trust and confidence,” said Terry. “We put all our trust in one place. We’re Hartford people.” ■



Damage to the home of Charline and Terry West in Tennessee.



Destruction caused to Erma and Horace Pate's home in Alabama.



Photos courtesy of The Hartford.

# Hearts and Hands Join Relief Effort

**A**s a global reinsurer, Swiss Re helps communities rebuild from and prepare for extreme weather. A company that focuses on risk, Swiss Re has to think the unthinkable.

Even with that mindset, it would be hard to anticipate a catastrophe of the magnitude of the May 22 Joplin tornado. In an instant, this community of 50,000 in southwest Missouri was paralyzed by the force of a devastating EF5 tornado.

Homes and buildings were leveled, lives lost and dreams shattered as winds peaking at 225 to 250 mph ripped through the center of this proud community.

In the days, weeks and months that followed, the nation opened its hearts to Joplin. Scores of volunteers flooded in to help residents pick up the pieces.

Back in July, Swiss Re Head of Reinsurance Claims Randy Nordquist told employees in the Kansas City office, “We’re going to Joplin!” A huge cheer rose up from the audience.

First, rewind to June, when Nordquist and seven other Swiss Re employees were in Joplin removing debris from a residence.

“We had the privilege of meeting the homeowner and her strength



touched all of our hearts, said Nordquist. “As we cleared the damage away, we were looking for personal things that might have value to her. After more than six hours of cleanup we found several photo albums and yearbooks. What a joy it was to see her face as she was given these lost items.”

The experience of Nordquist and his coworkers showed that Swiss Re had Joplin in its heart. The company eagerly adopted the city of Joplin as one of the beneficiaries of its annual Community Day, held in the Fall.

On October 21, a team of volunteers boarded buses for a journey they would never forget. Their destination was a 40-acre field on the outskirts of the city, and their assignment was to clear the field of storm debris. The landowner, Glenn Wilson, cuts the natural prairie grass every year to feed his cattle and the livestock of other area farmers.

Wilson is in poor health and a caretaker named Dave warmly welcomed the volunteers and provided them with cold water throughout the day.

Volunteers fanned out across the field with buckets and set to work picking up roofing shingles, siding, insulation, drywall and other building materials that had been ripped from houses and buildings miles away and dropped in the field. A few unusual and extremely random things turned up as well: CDs, DVDs, a canceled check or

**The Swiss Re team of volunteers cleared a 40-acre field of storm debris.**

two, a driver’s license, baseball cards and broken fragments of some old phonograph records. Of course, any of these items could be dangerous or even lethal for the livestock if ingested.

Later in the day, employees toured the heart of Joplin to see the devastation firsthand. Many commented it was encouraging to see rebuilding and recovery—made possible by Swiss Re and its many client companies who write property & casualty insurance policies for home and business owners in the area.

Senior Claims Manager Chris Iliff had also traveled to Tuscaloosa, Alabama, just days after the tornado there.

“The scenes in Tuscaloosa — just as in Joplin — were almost unimaginable — entire city blocks were barren, just leveled,” said Iliff. “Today, seeing the city of Joplin abuzz with activity and construction crews at work, I was moved by a feeling of hope. We talk all the time about the word ‘resilient’; well, this is a true demonstration of

*Continued on page 24*



Photos courtesy of Swiss Re

# Good Night, Irene

**H**urricane Irene created a virtual whirlwind — and a real flood — in State Farm® Agent Jennifer Campbell’s office in Winterville, North Carolina.

“The storm ripped through my area very early Saturday morning and lasted about 24 hours,” said Campbell. “My staff and I were taking claims from our homes. Our office was partially flooded. A client had a tree fall through his home. Thanks to this agency and our claim partners, we were able to get the entire family in a hotel and in touch with contractors within a few hours. We opened the office Sunday morning and contacted around 50 policy holders throughout the day.”

By Monday, her agency had taken more than 100 claims.

“The past few days have been a total whirlwind, but they have also helped me see why we, as State Farm agents, do what we do and how we truly make a difference in the lives of our clients.”

After making landfall near the Outer Banks, the deadly hurricane sailed up the East Coast, killing at least 27 people, knocking out power to millions, uprooting trees from North Carolina to Vermont and prompting the first-ever evacuation of portions of New York City.

State Farm associates kicked into gear — some of them having suffered damage to their own homes or offices — working overtime.

One of those who suffered damage was Agent Ron Cephas of Claymont, Delaware.

After being evacuated from vacation in Ocean City, Maryland, on Saturday, Cephas came home to ride out the storm. Shortly after arriving back in Delaware, a member of a church beside his office called to let him know that a tree had fallen on his office. An 80-foot oak tree had uprooted, taking out the second floor of his office building. The limbs poked holes in the roof, tore off the back gutters, downspouts, siding and back windows.

After restoring the power and telephone service, the agency was open for business on Sunday. “While assisting our customers, we worked with claims on our own repairs,” said Cephas. “At least I knew what our customers were going through.”

In Greenville, North Carolina, new agent Cory Kennedy said he’s proud of State Farm’s response to the disaster as well as the way associates work together.

“My team and I have used this disaster as an opportunity to practice what we preach. No one handles claims better than State Farm. We worked through the storm all week-

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**Hurricane Irene damages a home in southern Maryland.**

Photos courtesy of State Farm.







end. We're proud to have such great support from everyone — from our contractors, tree guys, local agency field office and claims. We want our customers to know that with every policy the best customer service comes standard."

North Carolina agent interns — Gary Davis, Erika Thomas and Steven Gillis — were pulled from their field development offices and deployed to help local agents with claims and customers.

Davis is helping out in an agency in Washington, North Carolina, one of the areas of the zone that was hit pretty hard by Irene. There's no power or access to computers but they're there for our customers and the community.

"There are people who don't have State Farm coming in the office to ask us what they should do because they trust the company," he said. "We have agents from other AFOs coming here to help us out. I'm proud to be with a company that has this much support."

Gillis said he had nothing but great things to say about his experience.

"I felt like we were in this together regardless of what areas were affected and to what extent," he said. "It was also comforting to hear on the conference calls that agents do not always have the answers and there are people within State Farm who are there to assist us. If I did not have loyalty before (which I did), I do now! I am proud to be a part of this organization."

Gillis is going to be located in Grandy, North Carolina, near the Outer Banks, according to Agency Field Executive Greg Monroe.

"So this is a great place for him to learn," Monroe said. "He is, in fact,

working in what is going to be his office, so he'll be helping his future clients." What better place for an agent intern to train than the place where the promise is delivered?

"The pride and confidence that all of these new agents have from seeing State Farm's response has provided them with a belief in what we do, our organization and their future with State Farm," Monroe said. "When Hurricane Isabel hit the Mid-Atlantic back in 2003, we were glued to our TVs to find out the latest updates and damages."

Fast forward eight years. Social Media gave those impacted by Hurricane Irene a front row seat — whether it was Facebook, Twitter or some other social network — so we could not only watch what was happening in other areas but also share how we were being affected with the world as soon as it happened.

Power out? Many people posted this on their Facebook wall before they called their power company.

Trees down in the yard? Let everyone know as soon as the house stops shaking.

Wherever they were, customers wrote about being able to talk to their agent, report a claim or express their appreciation for the safety tips.

At 10 p.m. on Sunday, a typical Facebook conversation went like this:

Friend: "We are having fun also — had a huge tree decide to uproot and take a buddy with him and land in our deck and roof. Just went into the kitchen and noticed the ceiling is nice and wet in one spot. So Sam's on the phone with State Farm right now."

Friend's response: "Amazing that you actually got through to your insurance provider! Hope all is okay."

Agent Brooks Baltich of

Richmond, Virginia, posted several hurricane safety updates throughout the weekend.

Jan, a customer, wrote on his page: "Thanks for calling your customers and providing claim information and support....in ADVANCE !!!! Thankfully, we did not have to call our "Good Neighbor," but I'm sure you received plenty of calls."

Many State Farm employees posted how proud they were to work for State Farm.

State Farm agents monitored their Facebook business pages to keep customers in the loop, updating office hours, posting their status if they lost power or were forced to evacuate, and reminding customers of the 1-800-SFCLAIM number and the ability to file a claim on Statefarm.com.

Agent Sue Cornelius of Waldorf, Maryland, wrote: PHONES AT THE OFFICE ARE DOWN but we are here. Send me an email at sue@suecornelius.net or go to www.suecornelius.net!

On his Facebook page, Agent Franklin Rouse of Leland, North Carolina, posted: "I will be at the office on Saturday and Sunday should we experience severe property damage in our area. There is a good possibility that our phone lines will be down. Should that be the case, you can call my main office number and the phone line will be rolled to a Customer Response Center. You can also call 800.SFCLAIM 24/7. Be safe, and God bless."

On Sunday, Franklin posted this update: "Phone lines pretty quiet this morning. Might have some downed trees causing damage, water intrusions in some structures but, all in all, I think we dodged a bullet in Brunswick County. Hope the best for our friends to the north." ■

## MORE STORIES FROM THE HURRICANE RECOVERY EFFORTS

### Dollars for Denim

Chartis employees have a long-standing tradition of helping those affected by natural disasters in their time of need. One of the more creative ways Chartis has supported communities devastated by the May 2011 tornadoes and Hurricane Irene is through its monthly Dollars for Denim program.

Chartis' Dollars for Denim program offers employees in the U.S. and Canada a way to maximize the power of their donations to important charities, while also giving them the opportunity to wear denim to work. On the last Friday of each month, employees who choose to wear jeans to work contribute whatever they wish to a designated charity. Chartis employees have been especially generous in their support of charitable organizations that focus on assisting those affected by natural catastrophes.

In response to inquiries from Chartis employees regarding how they could collectively help communities affected by the tornadoes in Missouri, Kansas and Minnesota, the regularly scheduled June 2011 Dollars for Denim Day was dedicated to raising funds for disaster relief in these areas. Employees donated over \$16,000, primarily to the American Red Cross' Tornado Disaster Relief Fund, in addition to other charities supporting tornado relief services.

Chartis employs hundreds of people in northern Vermont, some of whom were particularly hard-hit by Hurricane Irene. As a result, an extra Denim Day was held on September 20, 2011, which generated over \$19,000 in donations benefiting the Waterbury Food Shelf & Good Neighbor Fund.

### Bringing out the Best

While the nation was tracking Hurricane Irene, GEICO's Catastrophe (CAT) team was preparing to assist customers in the mid-Atlantic for the first major hurricane to hit the U.S. mainland since 2008. Irene's force and unpredictability was likely to result in widespread destruction from flooding and high winds.

As one of the largest auto insurers in the Northeastern region, GEICO wanted to ensure customers would be well taken care of, and the company started moving CAT teams of adjusters, supplies and equipment into position around the country.

At the same time, GEICO began steady communications with policyholders. GEICO sent early warnings about the hurricane's severity and urged them to take all precautions, follow the instructions of local officials, and report any storm damage as soon as it happened. GEICO also emailed policyholders, reassuring them that adjusters were nearby and letting people know they could file claims online.

On August 27, 2011, Hurricane



Photos courtesy of Geico.

**Hurricane Irene left a lot of severely damaged vehicles in the Baltimore, Maryland, area. GEICO adjuster Casey Theberge, left, was on the scene to help a policyholder.**

Irene made landfall as a Category 2 and traveled up the entire East Coast, leaving flooded towns, cities and communities behind. While flooding appeared to be Irene's worst impact, falling trees and heavy debris mounted in various communities throughout the Northeastern region.

Customers were grateful for GEICO's early outreach and expressed gratitude for keeping them informed.

One GEICO customer from Maryland wrote: "Thank you for the e-mail. I was fortunate and have no damage, but I wanted to let you know that I think sending this e-mail was a great idea and fabulous customer service."

From New York, another GEICO policyholder reaffirmed his loyalty: "That's why we will remain with you — because you care. As for me and the family, we are fine and just look forward to getting back to normal. Thanks for being there for us."

GEICO was also prepared to assist customers who reported vehicle damages after Irene hit. GEICO's special teams were dispatched to damaged areas so that claims could be processed immediately, and offices in the East increased drive-in availability for vehicles that could still be driven. Auto damage teams stayed in touch with auto auction houses to handle total loss vehicles.

Nancy Pierce, GEICO's vice president of claims, said, "Teamwork begins long before a storm's landfall and continues all through its aftermath. The talent and dedication of our associates ensures that we got everything covered for our customers."

Thanks to the preparations made by GEICO's CAT team, many of Irene's claims were settled within days after the storm.



## Aerial Survey of Irene's Damage

**A**s Connecticut's power companies worked around the clock to clear roads and restore power to the thousands still in the dark after Hurricane Irene, the State of Connecticut Department of Insurance (CT DOI) was also busy assessing the insured and economic loss in

the state. The CT DOI contacted The Hartford with a unique offer for an experienced property claims professional: participate in an aerial survey of Connecticut to help identify and understand the key areas of impact. The Civil Air Patrol, a volunteer auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force, provided the survey opportunity. Bob Nadeau, assistant vice president, property

claim practices, got on board to offer his expertise on behalf of The Hartford.

"This aerial survey provided a great opportunity to gauge both the frequency and severity of damage over a large area very quickly," explained Nadeau. "It will help mobilize catastrophe response teams and better address the affected residents' needs."



The flight took off from Brainard Field outside of Hartford, followed the east side of the Connecticut River to Long Island Sound, then headed west past Bridgeport and eventually turned north at Norwalk, heading back to Hartford. Observations indicated that there was minimal structural wind damage with localized wind-blown trees; damage to structures near riv-

ers and streams from excessive rain and resulting flooding; and pockets of severely damaged neighborhoods ocean side.

Overall, the survey suggested that Irene's impact in the state was "minimal to moderate-average severity."

"We were very excited to participate in this unique opportunity to give the industry and the Department

a good idea of where the key areas of need are from a claims perspective," added Eric Brandt, vice president, claims excellence. "We look forward to building a constructive and well-functioning working relationship with the CT DOI. We also understand the potential future benefit this surveying resource may give our CAT capabilities." ■

# Donation to Tuscaloosa Storm Recovery Fund

**D**r. Robert Hartwig, president and economist at the non-profit Insurance Information Institute (I.I.I.), met with Tuscaloosa Mayor Walt Maddox at City Hall in Tuscaloosa, Alabama on July 6 to present a check in the amount of \$10,000 from the I.I.I. on behalf of the insurance industry to the City of Tuscaloosa's Storm Recovery Fund.

The relief fund, a cooperative effort between the city of Tuscaloosa and the Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama Foundation Inc., was set up a day after an EF-4 tornado ripped an 80-mile path of destruction through the state of Alabama.

Hartwig toured the affected areas on July 6 along with I.I.I.'s Regional Representative Bill Davis, who had lived in Tuscaloosa as a child.

"Our hearts go out to the people of Alabama during this very difficult time," said Hartwig. "The insurance industry will fulfill its role as an economic first-responder to Alabama, helping people to rebuild their communities and their lives."

Private-sector insurers are expected to pay as much as \$2 billion in response to the 165,000 anticipated home, auto and business claims filed in the wake of the April 27 storms. According to Property Claims Services, this spring's tornadoes across the United States — if taken as a single event — would rank as the fifth-most expensive disaster in U.S. history with insured losses estimated at \$14 billion, trailing behind only hurricanes Katrina



**Bob Hartwig, president of I.I.I., surveys the damage in Tuscaloosa (above) and makes a donation to Mayor Walt Maddox for the city's Storm Recovery Fund (right).**

and Andrew, the 9/11 attack and the Northridge earthquake.

The City of Tuscaloosa's Liaison for Private Development, Kristen Love, accepted the donation on behalf of the City of Tuscaloosa Storm Recovery Fund. "We are truly grateful for this donation as it will certainly benefit the City of Tuscaloosa's recovery efforts and allow Tuscaloosa to move forward," Love said.

The fund will aid long term recovery efforts in the City of Tuscaloosa



and surrounding communities supporting five critical needs including Public Services, Parks and Green Spaces, Education, Social Services and Public Infrastructure. ■

Photos courtesy of I.I.I.

# Responding to Wildfires in Texas

**T**his year, Texas has witnessed an unprecedented amount of wildfires. In fact, seven of the top 10 largest wildfires in Texas' history occurred in 2011.

With 1,700 dedicated catastrophe claims specialists, 12 mobile vehicles at the ready, and a long-standing partnership with the American Red Cross, State Farm is there to help their customers recover from unexpected tragedies like this. In addition, State Farm's claim call center, 1-800-SFClaim, received almost 4,000 calls the week following the wildfire outbreak in Bastrop County.

Bastrop Memorial Stadium was filled with family, friends and supporters to cheer on the Bastrop High School varsity football team

on Thursday, September 15, 2011. It was an emotional night for all as this football game was the first time the community came together since the wildfire devastation.

State Farm agents James Allen, Lori Tuggle, Cory Pack, along with Agent Bill Mehrer and his team, were instrumental in greeting and providing support to the community. They also provided t-shirts and teddy bears to all in attendance.

Prior to kick-off, James Allen and Lori Tuggle presented a check in the amount of \$5,000 to the Bastrop Community Fund, benefiting Bastrop Ministerial Alliance and the BIRD Relief Fund.

In October, State Farm awarded a \$68,956 Good Neighbor Citizenship

grant to help volunteer fire departments that have been working tirelessly to protect the Lone Star State. The money was donated to the Texas Forest Service's Volunteer Fire Department Emergency Assistance Fund, established earlier this year to provide funding — via grants for fire-fighting expenses — to the hardest-hit volunteer departments in the state.

In addition to the grants and donations by State Farm, employees located in Austin, Texas, joined together to collect an additional \$1,255.72 for their neighbors in need. Bastrop County is located just 30 miles southeast of the State Farm Austin Operations Center.

As of October 13, approximately \$70 million in indemnity has been

paid on claims relating to wildfire damage. Nearly two months after the fire outbreak in Bastrop, State Farm's catastrophe mobile operations team was still present, helping customers recover from the unexpected. ■



Photo courtesy of State Farm

**Wildfires in Bastrop County, Texas, destroyed over 1,500 homes in 2011.**

## Delivering

*continued from page 8*

some of their policyholders.

“Our top priority during a catastrophe is ensuring the safety of our policyholders following the terrible losses many of them have experienced,” said State Auto Vice President and Chief Claims Officer Steve Hunckler. “We, along with our independent agency partners throughout the region, continue to work hard to help them through this difficult time.”

“From Tuscaloosa to Joplin to Hurricane Irene, there have been an unprecedented number of cat teams on the ground this year,” said State Auto Vice President and Claims Field

Director Larry Willeford. “Our cat team adjusters are supported by our Express Claims centers in Columbus, Indianapolis and Des Moines, and other regional claim offices. The need was so great following these cats, though, that we were ‘all hands on deck,’ using many resources both in-house and in the field to supplement our cat teams. It was the group effort that made the difference.”

Claim Manager Mark Chenetski of State Auto’s Property General Adjuster group felt compelled to travel to Joplin to help.

“It was the worst storm damage I’d ever seen. I met so many people who lost everything — their homes,

their loves ones, their pets and even their jobs.” Chenetski said. “In the month that I was in Joplin, we pulled in resources from many different State Auto teams to help people in our insureds’ time of need. Seeing the devastation in this community made me thankful to work for a company and an industry that is really able to deliver the promise of security that we sell.”

“We’re extremely proud of our cat teams and our entire claims operation,” said Willeford. “Our response to the spring storms was a true team effort. Without everyone pulling together, we never could have done what we did—deliver on our promise to our customers.” ■

## Hearts and Hands

*continued from page 15*

resilience.”

Resilient like the spirit of Swiss Re employees, who opened their pocketbooks as well as their hearts, collecting more than \$15,000 for the Ozarks Red Cross through Jeans Days at 11 of its offices. Kansas City-based employees also donated 37 pints of blood and the Swiss Re Women’s Network donated 67 “care kits” within days of the tragedy.

In total, Swiss Re and its employees donated more than \$70,000 and directed some of that money to not-for-profit agencies who have insurance policies with Swiss Re clients.

Client manager Gordon Lahti contacted Pamela Davis, CEO of a risk retention group called the Alliance of Nonprofits for Insurance, and Swiss Re donated to three of its members.

Preferred Family Healthcare provides comprehensive behavioral health and substance abuse treatment/prevention services. Their girls’ home and counseling offices in Joplin were both

destroyed and their boys’ home was damaged. Swiss Re funds helped them continue delivering essential services from temporary locations.

The Lonoke County Council on Aging, which helps older people live as independently as possible in the environment of their choosing, received funds to support the outreach provided to flood victims in Arkansas.

The East Arkansas Area Agency on Aging focuses on those who are overlooked by other forms of assistance. It distributed Swiss Re donations to six victims of the tornado — several with serious health problems — to help them replace lost furnishings.

Client manager Ted Barczak connected with American National Property & Casualty Insurance Company (AnPac), a client based in Springfield, Missouri, whose business and employees were affected by the Joplin tornado. Together, AnPac and Swiss Re made a donation to Convoy of Hope, which provided 600,000 pounds of relief and recovery supplies that took more than 8,500 volunteer hours to distribute.

Client manager and Missouri native Russ McGuire worked with American Agricultural Insurance Company and its affiliate, The Missouri Farm Bureau, to identify an organization called the Foundation for Agriculture to deliver funds for relief directly to those affected by the Joplin tornado. The foundation supported on-the-ground relief in the form of food, water and other essentials.

Volunteers walked away with an appreciation of how much it will take to help this city recover.

“Like everyone, I’d seen the devastation on the news, but words just don’t accurately describe it,” said Stacie Kramer, an analyst in Liability Management. “It’s humbling and kind of overwhelming.”

Said Jo Allen, a Senior Information Delivery Specialist, “You want to do everything you can yet you realize it will take the combined effort of many, many people to help get this town back on its feet.”

Allen added, “I’m just glad I had the opportunity to be here and contribute today.” ■