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Billion-Dollar Disasters

Extreme weather impedes progress and productivity

By Linda Mastaglio

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Reimagining Recovery: Decisive, Effective and Transparent

By **Peter Gaynor**, CEM, Vice President, Resiliency and Disaster Recovery, Hill International Inc.

Decision makers faced with leading a recovery program are best served by choosing an approach based on results, accountability and achievable metrics.

Managing disaster recovery with the same mindset and methods as traditional infrastructure projects often delivers all-too-common results: cost overruns and schedule delays, missed milestones and compliance concerns from federal funding agencies, Congress and local authorities. These challenges are magnified by the many stakeholders impacted by recovery progress and the heightened attention and scrutiny recovery efforts inevitably entail.

Conversely, approaching recovery with executive leadership—paired with industry best practices, tangible and measurable results and a clear program vision—fosters

on-time and under-budget projects, compliance with funding sources and satisfied communities and constituents.

Recovery leaders should note that the private sector has an important role to play. For example, private businesses would begin even a simple, one-time building project with processes in place for reporting, oversight and control. Choosing an experienced, qualified private sector partner with the right approach for your specific circumstances and challenges—and the proven tools and methodologies to support your informed and timely decision-making—is key to the success of your efforts.

Integrating program, project and construction management lessons learned from experienced partners and best prac-

tices from the private sector can inject your recovery with increased urgency, control and transparency. This drives progress cross the recovery, improves accountability for contractors and designers and provides leaders with meaningful, actionable data.

The reconstruction of your community must also mitigate the next disaster. Plan with your community's stakeholders to make certain risk management and mitigation is integrated into every aspect of your reconstruction program, helping to prepare for the long term. Regardless of the challenges your community faces in the wake of a disaster or where your program may be in the recovery life cycle, making the right choices at the beginning of your recovery efforts will drive progress throughout the program and beyond. ♦

Achieving Project Delivery Continuity in a Changing Landscape

By **Erin Capps**, JD, National Emergency Management Market Director, and **Anne Compson**, JD, Senior Recovery Program Manager, AtkinsRéalis

Following disasters, we engineers play a critical role in recovery and resilience.

Whether we're helping communities to build back better or creating advance solutions to mitigate damages, our role is to help protect life and property. Since 1979, when the Federal Emergency Management Agency was created, the landscape of funding for infrastructure projects has changed. From availability to timelines, keeping up with funding opportunities has been a challenge. To navigate an ever-changing project delivery landscape, here are some best practices to consider.

Define or update your community resiliency footprint: Communities with dynamic resiliency footprints are proactively safeguarding lives and livelihoods. By regularly assessing infrastructure, response and recovery capabilities, and social vulnerabilities, communities can adapt preparedness strategies to emerging

threats and changing resource availability. This may mean collaborating on planning activities such as a response plan or vulnerability assessment or prioritizing grant programs to pursue.

Identify and develop partnerships:

Strong partnerships between government agencies, private organizations and community stakeholders are critical for effective disaster management. Nurturing collaborative relationships before crises occur, results in more efficient response efforts, strategic resource sharing and expedited recovery. Ongoing collaboration is necessary following a disaster, but developing partnerships in “blue sky” times fosters a culture of shared responsibility.

Diversify available financial and technical assistance: Don't rely on a single funding source. Diversifying resources empowers counties, municipalities and

states to better protect residents and infrastructure while easing the strain of disaster recovery. A resilient funding strategy should incorporate federal and state grants, local tax revenue, private sector partnerships and community-driven initiatives. Technical resources can also be diversified through investment in emerging technologies, building local expertise and fostering cross-sector collaboration.

Leverage powerful and influential community advocates: Elected government officials can be powerful advocates for communities impacted by disaster. Officials with policy expertise, commitment to community resilience and a profound understanding of disaster response frameworks and funding can communicate clearly and persuasively to ensure that emergency preparedness and response efforts receive public and legislative support. ♦



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BEST PRACTICES

Integrate program, project, and construction management lessons learned from experienced partners and best practices from the private sector to inject recovery with increased urgency, control, and transparency.

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