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an InvestmentWires' Publication

Katrina-Hit TPA is Up and Running

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Published: September 20, 2005

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New Orleans-based TPA **Retirement Strategies** is up and running again, according to president **Bob Guidry**.

Guidry and his eight-person staff escaped Katrina unharmed, although several lost their homes and all of their possessions, said Guidry.


After Katrina hit the area on Monday, Retirement Strategies contacted SunGard's Relius Recovery Services, which was implemented on Wednesday after the storm. Retirement Strategies was back online by Thursday, said Guidry. SunGard's Relius Administration ASP product "gave us the availability to log on over the Web" said Guidry.

Retirement Strategies' 15,000 participants had access to Friday's records -- the last business day before Katrina landed. Besides relying on Recovery Services, Retirement Strategies also backs up databases to several servers, and creates tape copies of those servers. Records are kept for 2 weeks. Still, Relius' Recovery Services was the "fastest and easiest way to get back up," said Guidry.

By the end of the week after Katrina hit, Guidry had established a temporary Retirement Strategies office in Lafayette, Louisiana, while other employees sought shelter in Houston, Texas. Throughout the dark period, Retirement Strategies contacted brokers to update them on the TPA's situation. "Everybody was very understanding with the situation," said Guidry.

Guidry is now in the process of reopening its New Orleans location. Several newly homeless employees will remain based out of Houston, where they will continue to work for Retirement Strategies remotely.

The TPA has also contacted the IRS, which told the firm that it was the first TPA in the region to be back online. Retirement Strategies has already begun processing loan and distribution applications, which Guidry says are on a "definite upsurge."

"I think it's important that you know it can happen anywhere," said Guidry. "I think everybody has got to bear in mind ... you've got a moral responsibility to be up and running and to get money to people in need." 

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