

**Katrina Panel
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Statement of
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Good morning, I am Marty Hadfield, Vice-President of Engineering for Entercom Communications.

During the first days following Katrina, nearly 100 Radio stations and almost 20 TV stations were knocked off the air in Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi. We know that Radio is a source of information for people every day. But following a disaster, it's more than a casual source of what's happening – it is a fundamental support for survival and recovery. And nowhere was that more important than in New Orleans, home of Entercom's flagship station, WWL. WWL is a Primary Entry Point station for the Emergency Alert System. We knew that we had to stay on the air.

But the New Orleans streets were blocked and the building housing our studio was evacuated. We had already established a small broadcast studio at the Jefferson Parish Emergency Operations Center as part of our pre-disaster planning. That wasn't going to work for the long term, so we sent a staff member to look for alternate broadcast studio locations. We abandoned competition, focused on the community's needs, and ended up at the Clear Channel facility in Baton Rouge. Thanks to the FCC's instant reaction in granting waivers to several broadcast rules, we were able to coordinate the simulcast of WWL's programming on any AM or FM station in the region, thus allowing an ad hoc emergency network to spring to life. At its peak, over 50 AM and FM stations may have been carrying the common emergency and news programming to the people of the Gulf Coast.

People not only listened for news but also called in with heartbreaking requests for help and rescue. It's not an overstatement to say lives were saved by the radio waves.

Our disaster planning was good, but a fundamental lesson from Katrina is the need to cooperate and combine resources, which is what we did with Clear Channel and other broadcasters in order to handle the magnitude of the emergency. Our original disaster contingency planning had been developed from years of exposure to lesser hurricanes and other disasters. However, we had to be flexible, let people think on their feet, and be willing to entertain unexpected solutions to unexpected challenges.

We did have a few problems. Areas of focus for this panel should be:

- 1) Fuel availability and transport. Even when fuel was available, the conditions following the disaster made it almost impossible to get to the fuel depots and then transport it back to our facilities.
- 2) In addition to fuel supplies, FEMA/FCC pre-planning of alternate broadcast sites for critical broadcast media, possibly including frequency agile transportable transmission equipment that can be moved into a market so some broadcast capability can be restored promptly.
- 3) Advance planning for credentials and security to allow emergency repair personnel to better access and restore damaged communications infrastructure.
- 4) Advance planning for government security for critical communications infrastructure sites.

5) We also found a weakness in our internal Emergency Communications. Cell phones, satellite phones and other means of contacting our personnel were often not as effective as two-way radios. Fortunately, our emergency plan included all of these forms of communications.

6) Broadcasters need reliable and redundant communication with all the official sources of information during disasters and the aftermath. This would presumably mean having stations such as WWL hooked up with the more sophisticated communications networks which are used to interconnect national Guard, DOD, State & City police and fire departments, Red Cross, FEMA and other local and national emergency response agencies.

I want to state emphatically that it was a combined effort among Entercom, Clear Channel, the FCC and the local public utilities that kept WWL on the air. In addition, I am proud to say that through the advanced planning efforts of FEMA and PEPAC, we had some amazing successes.

In conclusion, I'd like to personally thank Mr. Chanel LaGuard at Entergy for his resolute drive to re-establish normal utility power to the WWL transmitter site and Mr. Peter Doyle and Mr. Richard Lee of the FCC for their service and attention to the needs of Broadcasters and the general public.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve on this panel.