

## A FIRST HAND LOOK AT DISASTER PLANNING (Part One)

By Joseph Marion

I wish to thank all of my readers who contacted me as well as the publisher of Processor for your patience in allowing me to miss last issue's column. I live in southern Florida where, the day before deadline, Hurricane Wilma turned our area into a war zone. As a matter of fact, I am writing this issue's column on my laptop, plugged into my automobile DC charger at 5:00AM, sitting in a two mile line waiting for gas. Now, two weeks after the storm we still have no power, no Internet and only two phone lines.

**This is the first in a series of columns I will write on things we learned during this disaster. Although this column is normally about the secondary and reseller market, I think there is much to be learned from my experience. And, truth be told there are a few members of the secondary /reseller market who provide disaster recovery and avoidance services such. But more on them later.**

### **All set for a Disaster**

Our company's disaster recovery plan was perfect, I thought. We had 10 hours worth of UPS for our servers. After that, we had generators to power our servers and workstations. We made sure that our data was backed up in placed in a secure location. We arranged for an alternative office location out of state (although as I found out later, none of us wanted to leave our homes and families AFTER the disaster struck.) We knew that we could always get new computers overnighted to us from the many members of the Association of Service and Computer Dealers, International. We knew that if a disaster hit our office, that our Internet connection might go down and therefore bring down our Web presence. Our web site is a critical information tool for many of our members, so we arranged to have a redundant site set up far away from our primary site. We were all set, or though I thought.

### **We've got the Power**

Start with power, since you can't do anything without power. I was not worried about power until I found out that our generator was not large enough to power all of the new servers we had recently installed. Furthermore, a printer, a fax and a workstation mysteriously died, when we turned on our generator after the hurricane. What I found out was that the generator we were using delivered "dirty" power which spiked and blew out our equipment. Now picture this. No power anywhere, people in line for hours waiting for gas, most stores were closed and whatever stores were open were sold out of generators, gas cans and everything else.

Luckily TWO phone lines miraculously worked in my office! I plugged in my laptop (which I charged along with 3 extra batteries before the storm) and found a web site that sold generators. I ordered two Honda EU3000 generators which are designed to power

electronic equipment and had them “overnighted” to our office. The EU3000 is equipped with an inverter which generates a very clean power and two EU3000’s can be joined in parallel for even more power. One other advantage of the EU3000 is that it is QUIET, as far as generators go. And it is started by turning a key instead of pulling a cord. Before I placed the order I called several freight carriers (on my cell phone which I charged in my car) and found out that only United Parcel Service was delivering to my area. OK. Power was ON THE WAY!

But we need to be able to store a lot of gas, assuming we could find some. Gas cans were all sold out in the stores. I was able to reach someone in Minneapolis who sent in via UPS eight 5-gallons gas cans overnight. It cost more for shipping than the cans themselves!

The next order of business was to make sure our web site was working. I will tell you all about THAT fiasco in our next column.

Right now, it is 8:30 AM and after sitting in line for 3 ½ hours I am about to get gas for our generators. What does that sign say? “\$50 maximum Per Customer” Oh, great!

While you wait for my next column, you should not wait to get YOUR Disaster Recovery Plan going. Start by doing what I did not. Seek the advice of a professional. Someone like one of these ASCDI Members:

Itgl-([www.itgl.net](http://www.itgl.net)) is a US company which provides a secure private network for replication, hosting, Disaster recovery and avoidance, and business continuance with a focus on regulatory requirements such as Sarbanes Oxley, HIPPA, SEC and NASD.

Abacus Solutions ([www.abacusllc.com](http://www.abacusllc.com)) is also from the US and provides a service in which they will replicate data at 2 separate facilities with concurrent mirrored servers.

IPS ([www.ips-bremen.de](http://www.ips-bremen.de)) of Germany provides Backup/Archiving services, data replication, and disaster recovery services.