

CASE STUDY: DEBRIS REMOVAL MANAGEMENT



COMPLEX PRIVATE & COMMERCIAL PROPERTY DEBRIS REMOVAL (PPDR/CPDR)

CHALLENGES IN RESPONSE TO HURRICANES IDA & IAN

CHALLENGES

Although hundreds of miles apart and separated by the Gulf of Mexico, Lafourche Parish, LA, and Lee County, FL, are united by their shared hurricane experiences—most recently Hurricanes Ida (Lafourche) in 2022 and Ian (Lee County) in 2023. The Category 4 hurricanes brought 129mph winds, and often higher gusts, which damaged buildings, uprooted trees and powerlines, and hurled debris and waste over properties and roadways in both communities.

Lafourche Parish was devastated—around 14,000 people were without homes and 75 percent of the communities' structures were either damaged or destroyed. Lee County lost 98 percent of its electrical power; dozens of roadways, including the Sanibel Causeway, were impassable; and more than 130,000 people needed housing assistance. The aftermath of the storms left these communities grappling with a variety of hazardous and non-hazardous debris that threatened to paralyze storm recovery efforts. Lafourche Parish and Lee County knew they needed help.

SOLUTION

Faced with complex debris recovery needs, these communities engaged Witt O'Brien's dedicated team of seasoned professionals who specialize in debris management and recovery. Working in coordination with other emergency response contractors as well as relevant state authorities, Witt O'Brien's teams first worked to survey the areas, developing plans and future activities to assist local authorities in completing their missions.

Witt O'Brien's understood that effective project documentation management would be critical for cost reimbursement and the projects' success. To facilitate both recovery and accountability in these communities, Witt O'Brien's designed its software to provide the data its clients needed, in their preferred format. This innovation eliminated the need for manual transfer, seamlessly integrated data into the clients' systems, and streamlined the process of cost reimbursement. The combination of hands-on expertise and advanced technological application enabled residents to resume their daily lives—and allowed clients to document their recovery activities comprehensively and transparently.

Resilience Delivered

Witt O'Brien's assessed:

7,246 properties in Lee County, FL

1,095 site surveys in Lafourche Parish, LA

- 550 surveys of derelict properties
- 545 surveys of applicants
- 232 properties with regular C&D demolition debris and PP debris
- 92 properties with RACM debris

[NOTE: Of those, 221 either withdrew from the program or were found ineligible by FEMA.]

Hazardous Materials: **Asbestos**

458 properties in Lee County and 92 in Lafourche Parish were found to contain asbestos material. WOB successfully monitored and documented the removal of materials from Lafourche Parish in accordance with state and local requirements to better position local communities for the recovery process to follow.



In both communities, extensive Right-of-Way (ROW) debris removal operations were required, both to facilitate access and logistics for recovery efforts, and to help communities fully assess the damage and plan for both temporary and permanent recovery needs. Each required experienced management as the complexities of complying with FEMA Federal funding requirements and managing hazardous debris and materials demanded it. The extent of the damage—especially to housing—also warranted Private Property Debris Removal (PPDR) and Commercial Property Debris Removal (CPDR) activities. This included obtaining rights of entry (ROE) agreements, landowner permissions, and extensive hazard surveys.

Once Lafourche Parish was pre-approved for PPDR and demolition, Witt O'Brien's was further engaged to support those efforts. The team set up intake locations throughout the 1,474 square-mile Parish—taking residents' assistance applications, identifying properties that needed attention, and distributing flyers. Witt O'Brien's collected residents' PPDR/DEMO applications, including ROE forms. They then conducted detailed surveys for later use. Once ROE forms and detailed surveys were completed, submitted, and pre-approved the firm worked toward the final verification of ownership, by collecting any necessary supporting ownership documentation such as tax bills, deeds, and bills of sale on trailers if applicable.

Once ownership was verified, the most technical aspect of the recovery began. The team faced the daunting task of not only identifying hazardous debris, but in Lafourche Parish executing its safe and efficient removal; and, in Lee County, ensuring hazardous material was accurately identified for safe removal.

The complexity of these efforts was heightened by the need to cater to the multifaceted requirements of clients as well as stringent regulatory agencies. These circumstances required a meticulous, strategic approach to debris removal that prioritized the restoration of ROW and eligible properties. CPDR, PPDR, construction & demolition (C&D), and regulated asbestos-containing material (RACM) debris was removed, monitored, and documented in accordance with FEMA, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and State regulatory requirements.

In Lee County, faced with similar challenges, Witt O'Brien's met the complex debris needs of demolition and sampling, testing, and documentation of asbestos that required careful management and coordination. The team assessed stricken residential properties to determine whether they needed to be tested for asbestos per EPA policy and State environmental agencies, or could be demolished, considered as debris, and subsequently treated as regular C&D debris.

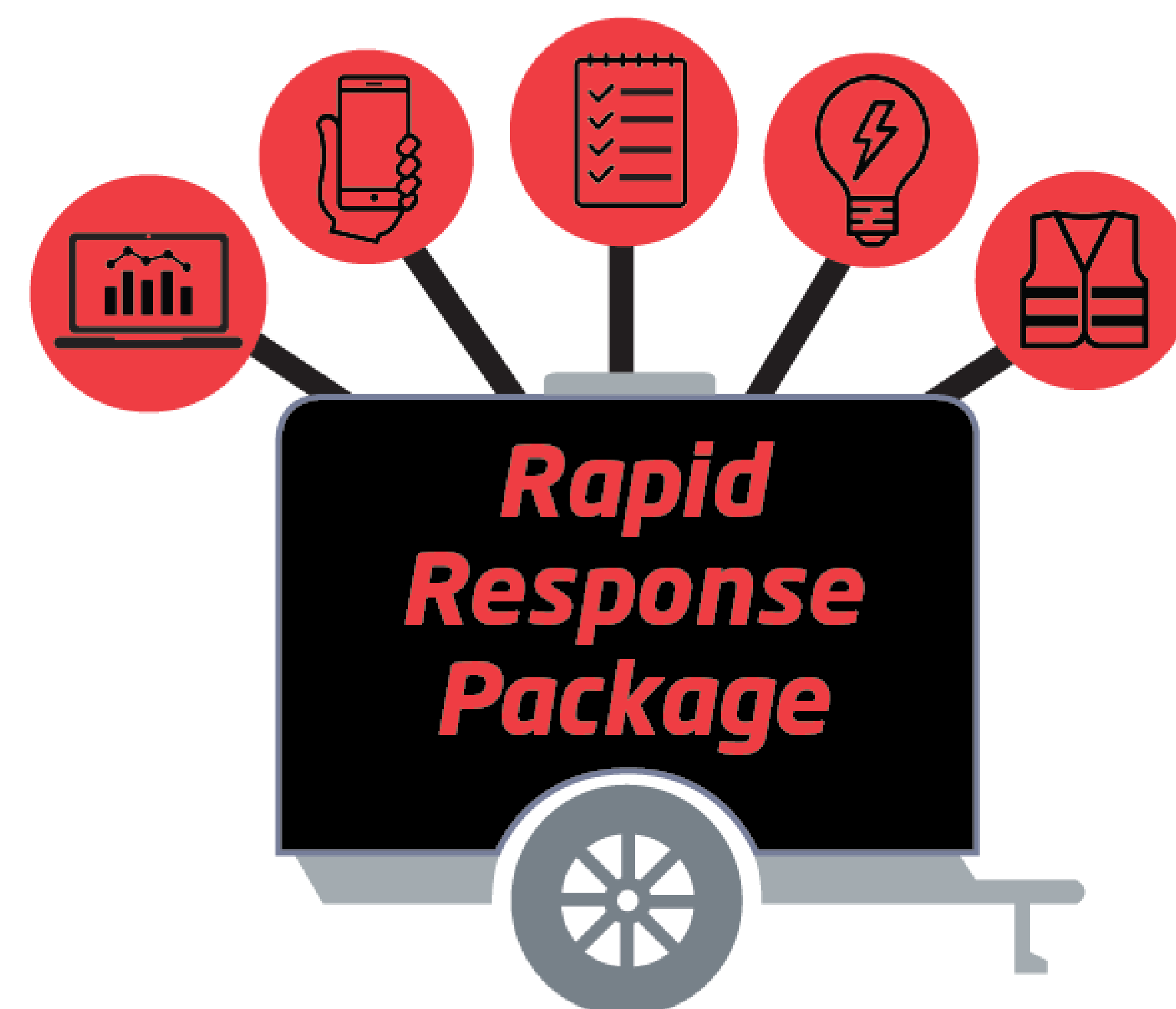
Resilience Delivered

In the aftermath of devastating hurricanes, Witt O'Brien's emergency management and debris monitoring experts rose to the occasion, tackling the intricate web of debris challenges in Lee County and Lafourche Parish. Their team brought decades of emergency management experience and the specialized experience necessary to respond to multifaceted technical intricacies and complex regulatory landscapes while efficiently managing financial reporting, transparency, and compliance. Witt O'Brien's not only met the diverse and pressing needs of its clients' communities but set a new benchmark for rapid, responsive, and comprehensive disaster recovery solutions in helping these communities return to normalcy.

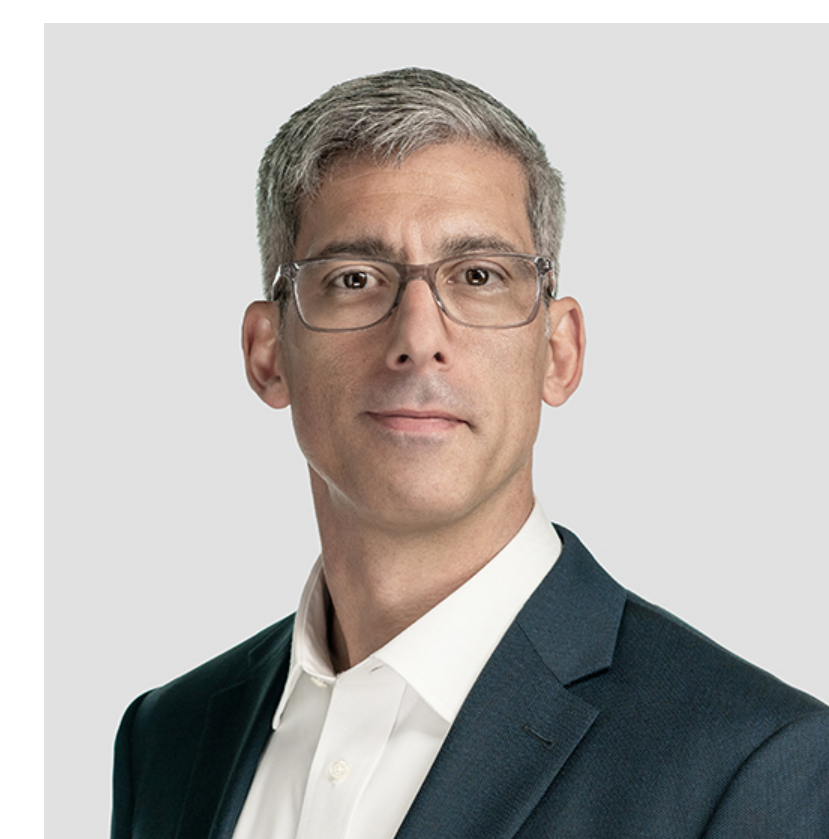
FLEXIBLE & RESPONSIVE

Our pre-positioned Rapid Response Package trailers are equipped with all the essential items to get to work.

- Hand-held units featuring Witt O'Brien's automated Debris Management System (ADMS), DebrisPro+™
- Laptop computers
- Generators
- Health & safety equipment (PPE)
- Field supplies
- Forms and documents
- Pre-identified vendor lists



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