

Eagles' Wings Foundation

Haitian Earthquake Relief Efforts

Hughes satellite broadband helps the Eagles Wings Foundation to deliver critical telemedicine and Internet services at the State University Hospital of Haiti.

It was a typical Tuesday afternoon in Haiti, with workers just beginning to pack up for their evening commutes home when the ground began to shake. At 4:53 p.m. on January 12, 2010, a 7.0 magnitude earthquake struck about 16 miles west of Port-au-Prince. The impact of the earthquake was immediate and devastating—230,000 people were killed, thousands were severely wounded, a quarter-million homes and 20,000 commercial structures had been destroyed, and the land-based network infrastructure was in ruins. The earthquake had created a disaster of catastrophic proportions in one of the Western Hemisphere's poorest countries.

Disaster Response

Thousands of people needed urgent medical care, but Haiti's hospitals and medical units were also in ruins. At the State University Hospital of Haiti in Port-au-Prince, the earthquake had rendered the hospital building structure completely unstable. Doctors and nurses were providing triage and emergency services to over one thousand patients per day in temporary shelters.

Communications with the outside world were nearly non-existent. The nation's fiber-optic network had been destroyed, and the few available cell towers were overwhelmed. At the moment when its patients most needed help, the hospital's doctors and nurses were cut off from the world, treating severe and unusual injuries without the ability to consult with medical experts or research treatment options. This small country, less than a thousand miles from the Florida coast, had become one of the most remote locations on the planet. Its doctors needed to get connected—fast.

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Enabling Telemedicine at the Most Remote Location on Earth

Arriving soon to help was the Eagles' Wings Foundation (EWF), a faith-based, non-profit organization and part of the throngs of relief support that descended on Haiti in the earthquake's aftermath. Headquartered in Florida, EWF provides short-term relief and organizational leadership/coordination of volunteers and professional personnel/services immediately after a disaster. EWF personnel on the ground quickly assessed communications requirements and turned to ReponseForce1, a Hughes reseller, to provide the reliable, satellite broadband solution that was needed to enable telemedicine at the State University Hospital of Haiti.

Within days of the first discussion between Hughes and ReponseForce1, Hughes satellite broadband technology was up and running at the hospital. Doctors now had the ability to send X-ray images and critical information about local patients to specialists around the world for their diagnosis assistance. “The activation of the satellite [service] will provide communications capabilities that will allow the hospital to provide better care for our patients,” wrote Dr. Alex Lassegne, Executive Director of the State University Hospital of Haiti, in a letter commending the EWF for its recovery and relief activities, citing the value of Hughes satellite technology. He added, “Most immediately it will afford us the capability of consulting with other medical experts worldwide.”

Connecting Even the Most Remote Locations in an Emergency

Unlike terrestrial technologies that rely on ground-based infrastructure such as cell towers that are vulnerable to being disabled or knocked out when disaster strikes, satellite broadband provides a true alternate and robust communications path that is easy to deploy and operates virtually anywhere using small dish antennas. Onsite support staff in Haiti rapidly deployed the Hughes Emergency Response solution—consisting of a high-performance HN7700S satellite router connected to a fixed 1.2 meter antenna and 2 watt radio. With this compact, though powerful, equipment and a clear view of the southern sky, EWF was able to deliver satellite broadband Internet access at speeds of up to 2 Mbps downlink and .5 Mbps uplink, which was more than enough to support the critical telemedicine application.

Throughout its valued mission, EWF leveraged the benefits of Hughes satellite broadband under extremely harsh circumstances and in varied terrains:

- Amid the rubble of Haiti's largest and most populated city, delivering telemedicine capabilities for the State University Hospital of Haiti
- In Haiti's remote, mountainous region of Tomassin, working with its Haitian partner, Mountain-Top-Ministries (MTM), to coordinate damage assessments and mass feeding operations as well as provide a vital lifeline to the outside world for MTM's 1300-student school

In both environments, Hughes satellite broadband provided a secure, reliable solution and demonstrated once again that—much like EWF—it supports effective emergency response in the most remote locations under the most difficult circumstances.



About Hughes

Hughes Network Systems, LLC (HUGHES) is the global leader in providing broadband satellite networks and services for large enterprises, governments, small businesses, and consumers. Its broadband satellite products are based on global standards approved by the TIA, ETSI, and ITU standards organizations, including IPoS/DVB-S2, RSM-A and GMR-1. To date, Hughes has shipped more than 2.2 million systems to customers in over 100 countries. Headquartered outside Washington, D.C., in Germantown, Maryland, USA, Hughes maintains sales and support offices worldwide. Hughes is a wholly owned subsidiary of Hughes Communications, Inc. (NASDAQ: HUGH).

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