CASE STUDY

TEAM RUBICON
DISASTER RESPONSE

DISASTER AND HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE AIDED BY WEATHER INTELLIGENCE

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Inside Operations at TEAM RUBICON DISASTER RESPONSE

Lauren Vatier
Senior Associate of Operational Planning at Team Rubicon

Team Rubicon was founded by two Marine Corps veterans who went to Haiti to help with relief efforts after the devastating 2010 earthquake. More than a decade later, Team Rubicon continues to coordinate disaster relief efforts led by military veteran volunteers, both internationally and domestically. The organization focuses on under-served and vulnerable communities and has deployed to over **440 disasters globally** and boasts **135,000 registered disaster response volunteers**. Teams on the ground focus on getting people back into their homes.

Coordinating Relief

Access to reliable weather data is key for Team Rubicon's operations. They need to identify areas impacted by severe weather quickly to get teams deployed. Monitoring ongoing weather conditions is necessary to ensure the safety of volunteers.

> " Weather is the most dynamic piece in all of this, it's going to be shifting, "
> said Lauren Vatier.
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> *Lauren Vatier, Senior Associate of Operational Planning, Team Rubicon*

When coordinating volunteer efforts, the Team Rubicon staff looks at three factors:

- Where the weather has caused or will cause damage
- The location of vulnerable population, which is largely based on socio-economic data
- The location of unmet need, which is determined by the response of emergency managers and volunteers during past disasters

Team Rubicon does not have a meteorologist on staff. In the early years of the organization, it relied on multiple weather sources to piece together forecasts.

When Team Rubicon met Baron, they were piecing together weather information from a variety of sources that didn't provide a timely, localized picture of the weather situation. They used this information to make decisions about the safest locations for volunteer deployment and timing. Baron was immediately able to deliver access to high-quality weather data, giving Team Rubicon the ability to see the impact of current and forecasted weather on specific neighborhoods and streets.

Lauren says Baron delivers actionable current and forecast data in an easy to understand display.

> " Before I would look at NOAA and NWS, read their assessments and try to understand by Googling what they were saying, " Vatier said. " Now I can go in and say 'Ok I understand this.' I can see what it looks like and be in more control and make my own analysis. "
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> *Lauren Vatier, Senior Associate of Operational Planning, Team Rubicon*

A key element of Team Rubicon's solution included staff training and around the clock support by degreed meteorologists. Baron sent a meteorologist to Team Rubicon's National Operations Center in 2018 to help analyze and forecast conditions for Hurricane Florence bearing down on the Carolinas. Baron also sent a staff meteorologist to Team Rubicon's Leadership conference to train the entire organization on the features and functionality of the weather display.

> " Having that deeper analysis is really helpful because it can give perspective and help us make decisions further in advance, " said Vatier.
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> *Lauren Vatier, Senior Associate of Operational Planning, Team Rubicon*

The staff at Team Rubicon will start tracking and monitoring when a storm is forming in the Atlantic. When they see it is a threat to land, they start ramping up volunteer efforts and doing daily briefings with Baron data as their forecasting guide. Lauren says they have a set of go-to Baron products to get a better understanding of the impact of a severe weather event that includes:

- Tropical layers
- Precipitation accumulation
- Radar
- Wind speeds

It's important to understand the type of event to determine the tools and resources needed. If it's a wind event, then tree damage is a primary concern and there will be a higher need to use chainsaws to remove vegetative debris with different cache and specifically skilled volunteers. When it's a more water-based event more muck outs are needed. The critical weather intelligence provided drives Team Rubicon's decisions.

A Hurricane Season Unlike any Other

2020 was the most active hurricane season on record with 30 named storms, including 13 hurricanes. Baron gave Team Rubicon powerful tools to pinpoint impacted areas and proactively plan relief efforts throughout the year. Two of the Hurricanes, Laura and Delta made landfall just 13 miles apart in Louisiana.

As Laura moved closer to land, Baron data helped Team Rubicon realize they needed to shift their response from a flooding event to a wind event. They positioned a road clearance team in Lafayette, LA, located just outside the forecasted storm surge area and safe from dangerous winds.

Hurricane Laura made landfall overnight. The first team quickly deployed to the hard-hit city of Lake Charles where they cleared debris and downed trees to ensure road access to critical infrastructure. The road clearance team was followed by waves of volunteers who were able to help hundreds of homeowners with clearing trees and debris, tarping roofs, and some muck outs.

In early October, Hurricane Delta was moving through the Gulf and projected to follow a strikingly similar path as Hurricane Laura. There were still approximately 100 Team Rubicon volunteers on the ground helping homeowners. Monitoring weather conditions was now important for planning an effective response and for the safety of those already deployed. The Hurricane Laura relief efforts were extended to help homeowners impacted by Hurricane Delta.

Volunteers were at risk of getting hit by this new hurricane. Team Rubicon had to monitor not only for volunteers but also for homeowners who were going to be affected again.

> For a hectic hurricane season or any weather-related disaster, Lauren says, “Effectively planning large-scale relief efforts would be much more difficult without Baron weather data at my fingertips.”
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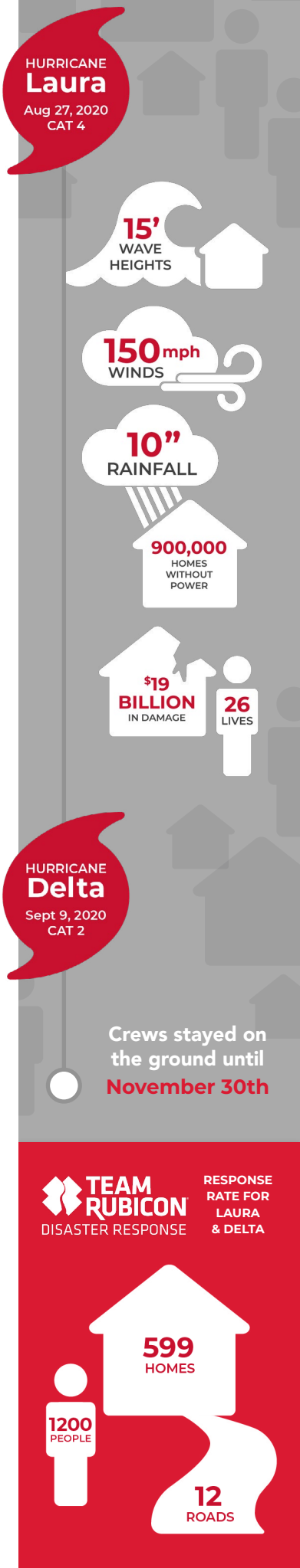
> *Lauren Vatier, Senior Associate of Operational Planning, Team Rubicon*

“I’d be more at the mercy of less reliable information, which puts a lot more guesswork into what I’m trying to predict or forecast. That is going to slow down our teams. If we position them a little bit off, it might take days to determine the best location to go.”



Summary of Work with TEAM RUBICON DISASTER RESPONSE

Challenges

Safely deploy teams of volunteers before and after devastating natural disasters by quickly locating the area of impact along with a safe location for staging.

Solution

Implementation of a web-based solution that provides high-quality Baron weather data. Baron delivers actionable weather intelligence including advanced forecasts, location specific data and interpreted weather guidance.

Benefit

Quickly pinpoint areas impacted or expected to be impacted by a severe weather event.

Weather visibility throughout the entire Team Rubicon organization via the web platform or the companion mobile app for use in the field.

Safe deployment of teams and supplies on the ground at target locations before, during and after the event.

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