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**Emergency services teams complete fire restoration and reconstruction at historic building in El Paso**  
**By Malcolm Stone**

After an early morning fire with extensive smoke and soot damage, Holland's Department Store and Bella Boutique in downtown El Paso, Tx. are now open and fully restored by [Paul Davis National](#) and [Paul Davis Emergency Services of El Paso, Tx.](#) The recently completed emergency services and disaster response work included structural board-up, demolition, fire, soot and smoke damage clean-up, building stabilization, deodorizing and reconstruction. The emergency services and restoration companies provided the services at Holland's, a two-story historic building at 402 South El Paso Street in downtown El Paso along with reconstruction services at the adjoining tenant space at Bella Boutique. Originally, the department store building was constructed in 1901 as a government center. In 1960, the Holland family renovated the space and established the department store. They added the tenant space in 2004.

Paul Davis National serves as the large loss specialists and is part of the Paul Davis franchise network. Paul Davis Emergency Services is owned by El Paso businessman Randy Mitchell with offices at 11394 James Watt Dr., Suite 706 in El Paso. Mitchell specializes in rapid response emergency mitigation services including board-ups, water and fire damage restoration, and mold removal.

During the early morning hours on Sunday, June 24, James Holland, Holland's Vice President of Operations, was notified by the local fire department that smoke was pouring from the building and a fire had ignited at the property. Flames emanating from Bella's Boutique engulfed the entire building with smoke and soot. The fire department was immediately on site and Holland called Mitchell, whom he knew from working at a family member's residential water loss emergency earlier this year. When Mitchell completed the initial emergency services board up at the department store, he called J. Murphy, Paul Davis National's Chief Operating Office to survey the damage. Murphy was on the scene the next day and proposed next steps to restore the building with the Holland and the insurance adjusters.

Afterwards, due diligence research by the insurance companies required the building to remain closed for a month before further work could commence. When the Paul Davis offices were formally approved to start the job, teams of company and local contractors worked around the clock to re-open Holland's in just four days. Bella Boutique remained closed for business until restoration and reconstruction was completed.

Initially when the fire occurred, local Paul Davis Emergency Services team members were on the job within hours of the fire department putting out the blaze. Along with fire and smoke damage, thick soot covered most surfaces in the building and interior spaces, plus merchandise, and water and fire retardant foam was left throughout the structure. Two days later, the advance team from Paul Davis National surveyed the site to assess the loss and provide manpower needs. The restoration team immediately began to staff the project with technicians who were certified and trained from The Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification (IICRC), along with contents experts and local subcontractors.

Crews began working 24/7 to secure the area and provided stabilization, demolition, structural clean-up, cleaning, restoration and emergency mitigation services, and repairs. Once the building was stabilized, crews worked on the project from 6 p.m. until 6 a.m. while moving merchandise and displays around the store to minimize displacement for operating hours. Also, work included large scale cleaning of fire, soot and smoke staining on interior spaces including displays, clothing, home goods and accessories, among others.

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The building's original brick and metal firewalls prevented the fire from traveling from Bella Boutique into Holland's. However, repairs were necessary and made to the roof and structural support materials, plus fire protection and heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC), and security systems were replaced. Also, electrical equipment was repaired and replaced and the interior of the building was re-painted.

According to Holland, the occurrence caused the store to close for business for first the time since the store opened in 1960. "We had never been closed to our customers during normal business hours," said Holland. "We were concerned because our customers were very anxious to resume their shopping activities and we had to tell them that it would be at least a few days before the store would open again," he said. "We were so pleased that the store was able to open so quickly with Paul Davis' help." Holland added that he and his family viewed Paul Davis' work as a miracle with the quick response, professional and timely work ethics, and effectiveness. "The restoration company far exceeded our expectations," he said. Holland expects the department store to open in mid September and Bella Boutique to open in late October.

According to Howland "Howdy" Russell, Paul Davis National's co-owner, the company served as the general contractor on the job along with Mitchell. "This was a multi-faceted loss due to the sensitive nature of the historic structure and the two businesses operating in approximately 40,000-square-feet of space. We were able to assure the retailers that the structure would be clean and safe for staff and customers," said Russell. "The response had to be carefully planned by a team that was experienced in large losses," he said.

Paul Davis managed and completed the work on time while overseeing the entire emergency services project to ensure the correct tactics and techniques were planned in advance and implemented with a proposed schedule, and with cost containment and technical accuracy. Russell added, "The carefully-planned and agreed upon course of action permitted us to complete the work in a timely manner and meet with deadlines for re-opening the popular department store for locals and visitors."

For more information, call Howdy Russell at 904.233.5245 or email [hrussell@pdnational.com](mailto:hrussell@pdnational.com). Visit the website at [www.pdnational.com](http://www.pdnational.com). Contact Randy Mitchell at 915-921-1774 or email [rmitchell@pdes-usa.net](mailto:rmitchell@pdes-usa.net). Visit the websites at [www.pdnational.com](http://www.pdnational.com) and [www.pdeseastelpaso.com](http://www.pdeseastelpaso.com).

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**About Paul Davis National:**

Paul Davis National specializes in large loss and is part of the Paul Davis franchise network. Paul Davis is a franchise system made up of more than 320 full service emergency services and restoration contractors providing site stabilization, emergency water mitigation, fire restoration, mold remediation, document restoration, contents cleaning, and remodeling services. Paul Davis National owns numerous tractor trailers and support equipment that are deployed throughout the U.S. to support their national clients as well as their fellow franchisees in the case of a major disaster. The company is headquartered at 2010 South 4<sup>th</sup> Street in Milwaukee, Wis.

**About Paul Davis Emergency Services of East El Paso:**

Paul Davis Emergency Services of East El Paso is a member of the Greater El Paso Chamber of Commerce, Insurance Professionals of El Paso (IPEP), Independent Insurance Agents of El Paso (IIAEP), El Paso Hotel/Motel Association (EPHMA), The Council of Independent Brokers and Agents (CIBA), Women’s Council of Realtors (WCR), Claims Association of El Paso (CAEP), Southwest Character Council (SWCC), Greater El Paso Association of Realtors (GEPAR), North East Business Alliance (NEBA), and Eastside Business Alliance (EBA).

Paul Davis Emergency Services shares the heritage of Paul Davis, the leading emergency service and property damage reconstruction provider in North America since 1966. Paul Davis Emergency Services franchisees are committed to maintaining the highest standards of quality, caring, and customer service. Company owners are provided with continual industry specific training and educational opportunities in mitigation technologies and methodologies throughout the year. Paul Davis office owners and technicians hold certifications from The Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification (IICRC).

**About FirstService:**

FirstService Corporation is a global leader in the rapidly growing real estate services sector, providing a variety of services in commercial real estate, residential property management and property services. As one of the largest property managers in the world, FirstService manages more than 2.3 billion square feet of residential and commercial properties through its three industry-leading service platforms: Colliers International, the third largest global player in commercial real estate services; FirstService Residential Management, the largest manager of residential communities in North America; and Property Services, including Field Asset Services, one of America’s largest providers of property preservation and distressed asset management and FS Brands, one of North America’s largest providers of property services through franchise networks. FirstService generates over US\$2.2 billion in annual revenues and has more than 20,000 employees worldwide. More information about FirstService is available at [www.firstservice.com](http://www.firstservice.com).

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