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Paul Davis National helps area college recover from damage after devastating floods in Pennsylvania

As a result of the devastating floods in Reading, Pennsylvania due to cresting waters in the Schuylkill River, Paul Davis National, large loss specialists and part of the Paul Davis Restoration franchise network, provided building restoration, drying and stabilization services along with reconstruction work for Reading Area Community College. In September 2011, approximately 30,000 square feet of water damaged areas at the college including up to a foot of water in a four story academic building, warehouse, carpentry and maintenance buildings. The majority of the flooding and water damage occurred throughout basement and first floor levels.

According to Howland “Howdy” Russell, Paul Davis National co-owner, the company served as the general contractor and provided restoration technicians along with a team of subcontractors for the project. The crews provided structural clean-up, restoration and emergency mitigation services, repairs and reconstruction. The project was completed for the returning teachers and students in just three days and in time for the new semester.

Initially, Paul Davis received the emergency call from college administrators last month when the area was deluged by heavy rain and localized flooding. Paul Davis technicians were deployed immediately to assess the damage on Friday, September 9. While four buildings were affected, one of the buildings, Penn Hall, was needed for students to use on Monday morning. Paul Davis’ advance team surveyed the site on Saturday to assess the equipment and manpower needs, and on Sunday, crews had arrived and worked throughout the night to have Penn Hall dried, cleaned and sanitized in time for students on Monday.

At the start of the job, the college buildings were closed as the flood waters receded and emergency services teams began to work around the clock while tractor trailers and hundreds of pieces of equipment were delivered and housed on-site. Equipment utilized included desiccant dehumidifiers, air movers, generators, and drying and contents processing equipment. Technicians removed and replaced porous materials such as drywall, carpeting, and base molding which came into contact with the river water. The contaminated Category 3 water, also known as “black water” had the potential to contain contaminated agents, dangerous bacteria and various forms of fungi. Because of this, all of the affected buildings and the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems were treated with anti-microbial solutions and prepared for state officials to inspect the property before college staff and students were permitted to return to campus.

According to Russell, the loss was not conventional and the response plan had to be meticulously supervised. Paul Davis’ experience in handling large losses was an advantage on the job, plus the company’s documentation practices served as a valuable deliverable. Cost containment and technical accuracy were critical goals while managing the project. The company’s main objective was to manage and complete the work on time while overseeing the loss site. Implementing the correct tactics and techniques in advance of implementation included a proposed plan of action to stabilize and restore the site. All appropriate parties at the college along with the insurance companies involved were aware of the proposed actions and pricing structure. This allowed the team to establish an agreed upon course of action and the work necessary to make effective and efficient decisions. And, ensure that all resources were in place to meet the tight deadlines.

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Paul Davis National responded to several property damage emergencies in the northeast and mid-Atlantic during the aftermath of the late summer floods for commercial and residential property owners. For more information, contact Howdy Russell at 904.233.5245 or email hrussell@pdnational.com. Visit the website at www.pdnational.com.

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Byline - Malcolm Stone is the Director of Marketing and Communications for Paul Davis Restoration Inc. He has more than 12 years experience in corporate marketing. Stone may be reached at 904.737.2779 or email mstone@pdrestoration.com.