



Polk County Radio Services

Radio Service Center
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August 29, 2007

R. L. Diniz
General Manager
Aluma Tower Company, Inc.

Dear Ron:

I appreciate you stepping up on behalf of AlumaTower to fill the gap left when Ted retired. I look forward to continuing the excellent working relationship I have enjoyed with the company for many years. As I mentioned in our phone conversation, I don't believe you will find a stronger supporter of the AlumaTower product, or of the growing need for transportable infrastructure.

My involvement with disaster response began in the devastation wrought by Hurricane Andrew in 1992. My trust and belief in the AlumaTower product was forged during Hurricane Opal in 1995 and numerous incidents since then.

I took delivery of my first AlumaTower in 1995 just days before Hurricane Opal made landfall in the Florida Panhandle. Based on our experience from Hurricane Andrew my organization (Lee County at the time) was tasked to deploy to Panama City Beach and establish communications throughout the Eastern half of the disaster area. My group deployed with an AlumaTower trailer we had just taken delivery of and had never set up, nor had any real clue how to set up. Upon arrival shortly after midnight the crew had to set it up, in the dark, with no prior experience. The unit was up and operating in less than two hours providing service throughout the next week.

While this speaks highly of my crew of very talented individuals, it speaks equally highly of a very robust and well thought out product. This version was the 100' tower with a 5' x 5' equipment shelter. During our stay in Panama City Beach, Motorola shipped us a 5-channel 800 MHz Trunked Start Site radio system which we subsequently purchased and permanently installed in the on-board shelter. To the best of my knowledge this was the first true Transportable Trunked System, which was made possible by AlumaTower and Motorola who have both become huge players in the world of disaster response.

Following our experience in Hurricane Opal, Lee County purchased a second AlumaTower trailer. This was just the bare tower of a somewhat shorter variety primarily for use by our RACES Ham Radio Operators. Both of these units remain in service in Lee County and the Start Site system has just this year been replaced by a 7-Channel Motorola Intellipeater Trunked radio system.

In 1997 after moving up to Polk County, Florida one of the first items on my list to purchase was an AlumaTower unit. This version was also the 100' type but with a number of enhancements and improvements. This unit had an 8' x 8' Equipment Shelter along with a 7.5 KW Propane fueled generator and an 80 gallon propane tank. The unit also has lift rings on all four corners which allows it to be picked up by helicopter and positioned in the most advantageous location. There is also a 4-way antenna mount we did the rough design on and AlumaTower further refined. The mount allows 4 antennas to be mounted up and 4 more to be mounted down. This design was truly a cooperative venture between both Polk County and AlumaTower and resulted in the best input from both the designers and the users.

The radio compliment for this unit was again provided by Motorola Communications, Inc. and includes:
A) 5-Channel Trunked Intellipeater System, B) Three 800 MHz Conventional repeaters on the mutual

aid channels, C) Three UHF repeaters, D) Three VHF repeaters, and a compliment of military Low Band radios.

In 1999 while our county-wide system was still under construction, this unit was used to provide communications for the Sun-N-Fun Air Show, which was the second largest air show in the country. That air show now ranks as the largest in the nation and is still supported by the AlumaTower.

In 2004 the AlumaTower was used in rapid succession in Polk County following Hurricane Charlie, then in Pensacola Beach following Hurricane Ivan for 10 days, then driven back through Hurricane Jeanne to be used again in Polk County.

In 2005 our unit again deployed to Pensacola Beach following Hurricane Dennis then made a 700 mile trek to Hancock County Mississippi following Hurricane Katrina. We operated our AlumaTower in Hancock County for 30 days which included being hit by the outer bands of Hurricane Rita. During the first 10 days it provided not only the only Public Safety radio system in the County, but the only operating radio system period.

At least two times during the deployment to Mississippi the AlumaTower was climbed for the purposes of installing some directional antennas. While not Man-Rated, the situation precluded us from bringing the tower down for any reason. With every responder in the area reliant on that unit for communications, a takedown for any reason was just not feasible. Even during the threat of Tropical Storm winds on the edge of Hurricane Rita the best we could do is lower the tower part way and strengthen the guy points.

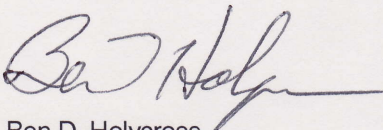
There were many lives saved and relief provided in these disasters as a direct result of this unit. But the saga does not end there. In 2006 and 2007 the unit provided Law Enforcement interoperable communications to man hunts following the murders of a Deputy Sheriff in Polk County and a Florida Highway Patrolman in Southern Highlands County. Both of these incidents were concluded successfully with no additional officers hurt or killed, in part because they were able to communicate.

Also in 2007, this unit spent over a month in Lake County Florida providing a temporary tower for the County after a tornado destroyed a 1,500' broadcast tower the County leased antenna space on. The AlumaTower along with our Joint Communications Support Unit continues to be on standby. We are in the early phases of getting the Military Airlift pre-certification process started on the Joint Communications Support Unit, including the AlumaTower trailer. Completion of this process will provide us an even quicker response capability over a much larger area.

In 2006 at the Governors Hurricane Conference, the Florida Emergency Preparedness Association awarded us with the Emergency Management Award of the year. This was the first time this award has ever been presented to a Communications Unit. In all honesty I must point out that the three factors that allowed our accomplishments were A) Great staff, B) Great radio systems, and C) The AlumaTower which is the centerpiece of our response capability.

I look forward to our upcoming meeting and will be glad to share some pictures of our current unit in Action.

Sincerely,



Ben D. Holycross
Radio Systems Manager
Polk County Division of Emergency Management