



September 9, 2016

Mr. Ben Lewis
State Water Trainer
Florida Rural Water Association
2970 Wellington Circle
Tallahassee, FL 32309

Dear Mr. Lewis,

I am writing to express my sincere gratitude and heartfelt thanks for the assistance you provided to the City of Tallahassee during our community's struggle with the aftermath of Hurricane Hermine. Although not a terribly fierce hurricane, Hermine decimated our community's electrical grid, and in the process, interrupted power to all of our sewage pump stations and 25 water supply wells. While our larger facilities have back-up power many of the smaller ones do not. As a utility provider you can visualize more than most, our rising level of concern when our facility assessments began to pour in and we discovered that roughly 80% of our community's sewage pumping capacity was inoperable.

It is for just such situations that we all belong to and support the FlaWarn System. Within hours of the storm passing we understood we needed help and we knew where to turn to get that help. We reached out to our fellow utilities across Florida through the FlaWarn network and requested assistance. The response was immediate and so plentiful that we had to assign more staff to manage the calls and coordinate resources. Within four hours of our request reinforcements arrived and were placed into service, and additional resources continued to arrive in Tallahassee for the next 24 hours.

Responding agencies included: South Walton County Utilities, City of St. Cloud, City of St Augustine, Jacksonville Electric Authority (JEA), Orange County Utilities and the Florida Rural Water Association. They provided us with needed equipment and teams of highly skilled and trained workers who were extremely effective in helping us restore a manageable operational system. Hermine passed through our service area in the early morning of September 2nd and by September 5th, the FlaWarn mutual aid teams had been completely de-mobilized. In other words, the immediate and effective assistance provided by the FlaWarn mutual aid responders, helped us recover our footing and become self-sufficient within three days.

Our entire community is indebted to FlaWarn, the agencies that responded, and most importantly, to the individual professionals and technicians who came to our rescue. Without a doubt, the issues we faced would have caused greater harm to our community and to the environment had they not come ready, willing and able to work. Rest assured that you can count on us to be there in your time of need, but until then we can only extend our sincere thanks and appreciation.

Sincerely,

Mike Tadros, General Manager
Underground Utilities & Public Infrastructure

Cc: Gary Williams, Executive Director, FRWA
Rick Fernandez, City Manager, City of Tallahassee
Reese Goad, Deputy City Manager, City of Tallahassee
Joseph Cheatham, Wastewater Operations Manager, COT
Chuck Ziegmont, W/WW Compliance Manager, COT

