



RADIO SERVES AS A LIFELINE DURING A COMMUNITY'S TIME OF NEED

By: Caroline Beasley, Chief Executive Officer, Beasley Media Group

Hurricane Irma was the most destructive natural disaster to hit Southwest Florida in over 50 years.

More than half the state was left in the dark by the time Irma had left her mark on Florida. Homes and businesses were destroyed. In many areas, infrastructure was wiped out. And tragically, more than 40 people lost their lives.

During times of great challenge, radio broadcasters serve as a lifeline on which listeners can depend. We in the industry take this role very seriously. Our team at Beasley Media Group embraces this responsibility in the communities we serve on a daily basis.

Our stations provided a link to the outside world. Some listeners were prepared with battery-operated radios, while others used their car radios or listened on their phones through our streaming apps.

Not only did on-air personalities provide important information regarding listeners' safety and the resources available to them, they gave listeners a human connection by helping them feel some sense of security: by being there to answer calls and providing a voice to those struggling throughout the storm. That is what radio is all about.

Our incredible on-air personalities and production crews made sure that lifelines were there during the most harrowing hours of Irma's fury.

For example, Nio Fernandez of 92.5 Maxima stayed on the air for 19 hours straight – broadcasting in Spanish to make sure all listeners had access to critical updates. Nio operated out of our Tampa station, translating the news from English to Spanish on the air live as he received it, while also comforting listeners who called the station.

In Fort Myers, Program Director Jeff Zito also manned the controls around-the-clock during the storm at WRXK 96.1 FM, taking calls from listeners and keeping the station on air while his dog camped out in the studio alongside him.

Our engineering team worked diligently to keep our Florida broadcast signals and systems working properly in order to get the word out to thousands of listeners across the state, as well as ensuring that our corporate office in Naples was up and running in an effort to provide additional support to our stations.

During the hard days of Hurricane Irma I'm very proud that our employees– like so many Floridians – actually defined human excellence, and real humanity at its best. I am honored to be a member of their team.

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