Trains Kept Safe Through California’s Disastrous Mudslides

October 15, 2015: Stunning flash flood. Miles of mud. A pregnant woman was trapped. Eighteen semi-trailers entombed by mud. Traffic snarled for days and for miles on a busy highway in a remote section of California mountains.

According to ABC News’ Los Angeles Bureau October 16: “State Route 58 in Kern County near Mojave east of Tehachapi was expected to be shut down for a few days, the CHP said. There were 5 to 6 feet of mud and rocks still on the roadways. Thursday’s rain came down very hard starting around 5:30 p.m. Within about 20 minutes of severe showers, the CHP said they received 911 calls about a mudslide that was moving so fast, it immobilized around 200 vehicles. The mud has since hardened, making it feel as hard as concrete. Search-and-rescue crews were probing the dirt amid concerns there may be people or cars under the mud.”

Unfortunately the U.S. government did not issue a flash flood warning for this fast-developing flood, but AccuWeather Enterprise Solutions™ (AES) did.

The government issued an “areal flood warning” for a vast section of central California (see illustration). Shutting down road and rail traffic over this vast area is simply not feasible. AccuWeather’s SkyGuard® severe weather warnings provide precision warnings that are highly actionable. They provide the information you need, when you need it, in the form you need it.

AccuWeather Enterprise Solutions initial flash flood warning was issued at 5:39 p.m. PDT, which gave the railroad over 20 minutes of lead time to clear the track before the mudslide occurred.

When the water, mud, and rocks cascaded across the area, the normally busy Union Pacific railroad tracks were empty. Trains were out of harm’s way thanks to AccuWeather Enterprise Solutions’ precise warning.
Not only were the lives of railroad workers and millions of dollars of damage potentially saved by AES’s warning, without trains to block the tracks, Union Pacific maintenance crews were able to quickly clear the mud and repair the track. Trains were starting to run just 36-hours after the flood occurred. It took six days to open the highway. This is a perfect example of achieving our goal of protecting our clients’ people, property and profits.

Just ten days before, record floods struck South Carolina killing 19 and causing a stunning $1.9 billion in damage (lower right photo). Interstate 95 was closed for four days. Again, AccuWeather Enterprise Solutions’ weather scientists worked tirelessly around the clock for four days conferencing with, and preparing special forecasts for clients in the insurance, transportation, retail, financial services and other industries in the path of the flooding in order to mitigate its effects.

Why Is This Information Critical to Your Business?
AccuWeather is forecasting a major shift in weather patterns this year due to the El Nino in the Pacific. An El Nino is an area of warmer than usual water along the equator from South America to Christmas Island. We believe it will cause frequent, heavier-than-usual rains in the southern United States. It will also cause unusual winter tornadoes in the Southeast and possibly, Southern California. Very heavy snow is likely in the Intermountain region (photo on pg. 3).

Businesses have two choices: be a passive victim to Mother Nature or partner with AccuWeather Enterprise Solutions to proactively mitigate losses and leverage opportunities provided by the weather.

Some Examples of Our Services for Business:
• AccuWeather’s D3 weather analytics services helps you understand precisely how weather and natural hazards affect your sales and all aspects of your business.
• We assist retailers to assure that store supply matches weather-driven demand. For example, if flooding is forecast, retailers can have extra wet-vacs, generators and other critical items in stock.
• AccuWeather provides critical information to ensure your supply chain is unbroken during blizzards, ice storms and floods.
• Our SkyGuard® site-specific and highway-specific warnings provide the precise and timely storm warnings of tornadoes, hurricanes, lightning and other hazardous weather to protect your people and property and minimize business disruptions.
Is Your Business Prepared?
Every day each of us interacts with weather, planning our days and weekends around it. But the weather forecast is far more than just a three-minute segment of the evening news or a swipe of a smartphone. Weather impacts businesses and companies worldwide in ways that are often devastating such as the dramatic mudslide in California, the recent extreme floods in South Carolina and Texas, and the catastrophic hurricane in Mexico.

AccuWeather Enterprise Solutions provides highly customized, accurate services to the transportation industry including site-specific, severe-weather warnings for moving or fixed assets. The unique value of these services is underscored by the fact that we protect all U.S. based Class I railroads as well as the largest railroads in both Canada and Mexico and several state departments of transportation.

Many Fortune 500 transportation companies are already experiencing the difference advanced weather warnings and information from AccuWeather Enterprise Solutions can offer. Here are a few ways AccuWeather serves transportation companies:

- Timely forecasts and warnings of floods, tornadoes, ice, extreme temperatures, hurricanes and other severe weather that may threaten moving assets, rights-of-way, terminals, and other critical physical plant.
- Maintain service by warning of severe weather that may require the re-routing of shipments or the deployment of additional maintenance personnel and equipment to promptly repair storm damage.
- Plan for potential fluctuations in volume and routing of shipments due to short-term storm events or seasonal variations ranging from a severe winter to an active hurricanes season.

Only AccuWeather issues warnings for all types of storms — independent of the government’s warnings. We’re here with expert storm warning meteorologists, watching over you and available by phone 24 hours a day, 365 days a year who tailor our warnings and forecasts to meet your business’ specific requirements. That means your storm information is specific to your facility or point of interest — not an entire county or polygon.

Call AccuWeather Enterprise Solutions today. We will work with you to tailor a plan for your business. Don’t delay. After all, the next storm may already be on the way.

Contact us today at: 814.235.8600 or salesmail@accuweather.com. Visit us at: AccuWeather.com/EnterpriseSolutions.

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