AccuWeather Helps Lowe’s Deliver Vital Services in Extreme Weather Conditions

AccuWeather Enterprise Solutions, the commercial weather services division of AccuWeather, is delivering mission-critical solutions to help businesses, governments, the media and institutions look after people, property and profits during times of extreme weather.

A range of organizations are benefiting from AccuWeather’s products and services, which include accurate, site-specific and customized severe weather warnings, short and long-range forecasts, legal forensics and weather-triggered analytics.

With this insight, companies can gain actionable insights and provide the services and support to people that is necessary to counter the effects of extreme weather. One such company is Lowe’s, a US-based chain of retail home improvement and appliance stores.

When bad weather hits, it is vital the company has sufficient numbers of home-fortifying supplies in their stores, particularly in the hardest hit areas. Using AccuWeather’s detailed forecasting, the company has been able to meet demand at a vital time.

“That information allowed us to get winter supplies to our stores before they became scarce,” said Rick Neudorff, manager of Lowe’s command center, founded in 1989 in response to Hurricane Hugo. “The challenge is to have products available ahead of time, so when everyone else is scurrying around to restock, you’re in good shape and not trying to pull out of an inventory deficit.”

AccuWeather’s customers range from 2,000-strong retail chains such as Lowe’s to small school districts and plowing services.

“We provide weather-related data for a wide range of corporate and consumer consumption,” said Casey McGeever, AccuWeather’s chief commercial officer. “We provide highly specific weather forecasts, specific to business needs, such as hyper-accurate and hyperlocal severe weather warnings. This helps save hundreds of lives every year.”

AccuWeather provides data that can relate historical weather to warranty claims and weather predictions that are tied to future product sales.
“We have an enormous amount of data that underlays all our products, all stored in the cloud on Azure,” McGeever said. “Almost all of that is done in SQL. All of it goes through Outlook, Word and Excel. We are a big data company. We need to move around and deliver instantly. It’s a powerful platform for us. Seconds matter when life and death decisions are happening.”

With AccuWeather’s solutions, staff at Lowe’s can avoid having to make time-consuming and labor intensive business decisions and rely on the data at hand.

“It’s made a big difference because it helps us properly prepare,” Neudorff said. “AccuWeather helps us because it’s so pin-pointed within short periods of time and it’s extremely accurate, both with short-term and longer-term forecasts. For instance, with the significant rainfall last year in Chicago, Detroit, Phoenix and Long Island, we were able to see which areas were getting more rain, then change our routes if we knew those roads would be washed out.”

When major snowfall hit the US during last winter, Lowe’s stores had snow blowers, shovels, heaters, ice melts, rock salt and roof melts to help customers cope with the extreme conditions.

“Lowe’s is a destination after – as well as before and during – a major weather event,” Neudorff added. “To get back to normal, customers need to know we have the items they need. We need to proactively get those products to them. It’s important for a smooth operation of our stores to not have disruption, so we can take care of our community and customers coming in frantically looking for specific products.”

Sean Dudley, OnWindows
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