



CASE STUDY

# Niscayah Restores Post-Disaster Systems in Record Time

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–Dan Lackey, Niscayah

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Hurricane Katrina's tremendous personal devastation for New Orleans citizenry and the long, demoralizing delays in aid and recovery efforts are universally known and deplored across the globe. Less well publicized is the devastation to businesses, and, in many cases, the heroic efforts by dedicated technicians to quickly get them back into production for the public good. This was the case for a leading gasoline refinery located near New Orleans, and a dedicated recovery team from Niscayah.

The refinery, which typically refines 250,000 barrels of oil per day, closed down when hurricane Katrina advanced toward the Gulf coast in August 2005. Along with the better part of New Orleans and southern Mississippi, the refinery was inundated in the storm surge, inflicting interior damage to levels as high as eight feet. Much of the refinery's first-floor production equipment was destroyed and its electronics and infrastructure knocked out. Large parts of the physical plant itself – walls, floors, doors, and windows – required repair or full replacement.

"It took about a month to get the water pumped out of greater New Orleans," says Dan Lackey, account executive for Niscayah. Their regional office is located in nearby Harahan, in Jefferson Parish just outside of New Orleans. Due to the storm damage Jefferson Parish was closed until the first of October.

"Because we handle CCTV and Access Control for the Parish, we were given special passes to return to the Parish early and fortunately we were able to get back into our own office within a week. We had our power and phones restored a week later, so we could work on our own recovery," Lackey explains. Niscayah had a 10-year relationship with the New Orleans refinery, supplying, integrating, and maintaining its entire access control equipment and infrastructure.

"The refinery contacted us via cell phones during the first week after the storm asking us to meet in Lafayette along with several of their other vendors for a site evaluation," he continues. "No roads were open into the city yet, so they flew our technician via helicopter down to assess the damage."

The devastation within the refinery was extensive. Nearly all the operational equipment was dysfunctional as well as all electronics on the first floor. Lackey explains that in tearing out damaged sheetrock, the electronics infrastructure – cabling, etc. – had been pulled out or was damaged too, all requiring replacement and/or re-installation.



### **Unique Challenge**

Unprecedented devastation due to hurricane damage and massive flooding, impassable roads, with few public recovery and relief efforts available during the first month.

### **Niscayah's Rapid Response**

New Orleans, southern Mississippi, and surrounding towns devastated by Katrina, and ultimately the entire nation depended heavily on the petrochemical refineries along the Gulf coast – never so much as in the weeks and months following the Katrina disaster. Getting the plant back up and producing gasoline again was imperative. Repairing the security system was equally imperative. Due to OSHA safety regulations, the plant cannot run without systems in place to track all employee locations. The OSHA rules as well as liability issues regarding access authorizations dictated that access control must be functional before the plant became operational again.

"We established an open agreement that we'd do whatever it takes," says Dan Lackey. "We began purchasing parts and had our suppliers ship them to Atlanta because UPS and FedEx weren't able to deliver yet – the roads were still impassable. So those first couple of weeks our technicians acted on a triage basis – they cannibalized any equipment that was still usable to set up working systems on a location-by-location basis."

Within a month, a riverboat was brought down and docked at the refinery. Niscayah technicians along with other recovery contractors slept and ate on the boat to sustain them as they worked from dawn, often through to 3 AM the next day restoring security systems. The Riverboat technicians were also working on other Niscayah customer systems as well as the refinery. "They'd eat, sleep briefly, get up and do it over again, day after day."

Niscayah had to replace extensive damaged equipment in the refinery plant, often moving the controllers and power supplies to the second floor above the water line. Plus the company had the team do additional work as the plant rebuilding progressed.

Keeping track of the new work as well as replacement and repair of existing systems added another layer of complexity. "But," says Lackey, "we got all our systems up and running so that there were no delays in testing and production at the plant. And as our technicians were working to keep this schedule at the refinery, they were also working on 20 or 30 other projects."

### **Unique Service Commitment: Disaster Recovery**

Niscayah technicians traveled via helicopter and boat to the customer site. They worked long grueling hours day after day in a hot and noxious environment, doing "whatever it takes" to restore customer access control systems and infrastructure in record time.

### **Unique Level of Service**

This was our first full disaster recovery," Dan Lackey notes. "The dedication, diligence, and bone-grinding work on the part of those technicians was unique in our experience and from the customer's

perspective too. They told us more than once how impressed they were by our employees' work ethic. They were consistently doing 60 to 70 hours a week and sometimes more, in an extremely hot, noxious environment, and living away from their families who had evacuated to Houston. We rented a trailer in Ascension Parish, north of New Orleans, because many of the technicians had lost their homes. The last technician made permanent living arrangements and left the trailer April '06."

"Finally," he concludes, "though a disaster on the scale of Katrina is extreme, the tech team's response is in keeping with our commitment to meet and surpass our customers' needs and expectations. It is a tremendous source of pride and accomplishment for our branch."



**Niscayah** is one of the largest international security systems integrators, offering complete solutions for commercial customers, with specialized offerings in industry segments such as banking, chemical, healthcare, retail, educational and enterprise organizations. Niscayah is part of Niscayah Group AB, an independent company that is publicly traded on the OMX Nordic exchange in Stockholm and has approximately 6,000 employees and operations in 14 European countries, Australia, the United States and Hong Kong.



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