

→ Emergency Responders

Whether your greenhouses are battered by hail or swept away by a tornado, one industry company is less than 24 hours away from getting you back on track.

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LARRY Gude won't forget Feb. 5, 2010 anytime soon. That's the date a monumental winter storm dumped two feet of snow on his greenhouses in Frederick County, Md., forcing a collapse of about 30,000 square feet at Gude Brothers Greenhouse.

"The snow was very deep and very wet," Gude says. "One of the sections of houses we had was structurally overwhelmed by the weight. It didn't go down like dominoes; it went down in sections. It was a mess."

The thought was always in the back of Gude's mind that his venlo-style greenhouses could collapse under the weight of a heavy snow. Gude had, after all, prepared for a day like Feb. 5 with his insurance agent, Hortica's Luke Eckley, upon renewal each year.

Gude's first call following the collapse was to Eckley. His next was to Tom Richey, Hortica's vice president of property claims, who referred Gude Brothers to LL Klink & Sons, a greenhouse building, maintenance and repair company with available crews.

"We went down on Saturday, Feb. 5, and



(LL Klink's) Shawn (Brown) had two of his crew guys who were up in New Jersey here that night," Gude says. "They got here through the snow and everything. I was instantly impressed with that."

Immediately, the two crew members began to take measurements and build a list of parts to figure out what could be done to mitigate loss. The next day, a whole crew was on site, and it went to work.

"There was two feet of snow," Gude says. "I had no idea what to do. It was just a complete feeling of helplessness. But

Klink's crew got here and dove in head-first, swinging hammers, putting up plastic and cutting what needs to be cut. They were doing a fantastic job with what could be saved. It was fabulous to watch because we were in a weird position – our center section went out and we had bays on both sides of it that were still standing."

As Gude describes, the LL Klink crew used two-by-fours and plastic to temporarily shore up leaning sections. There were electrical panels in an affected area, and the crew did what it could to maintain electricity throughout the facility.

After working all day Sunday, Monday and part of Tuesday, the LL Klink crew finished up and was already on its way to its next job. But just minutes after the crew left, a section of plastic it had assembled to protect one greenhouse caved. So Gude called LL Klink's Jim Keller.

"Ten minutes after they left here, I called Jim and said a section blew out," Gude says. "He said we'll be right there. They came back and dove right back in. They more or less won the rebuild project right there. You've got to work with people like that. They went above and beyond the call of duty."

Emergency Service Providers

The Gude Brothers fix isn't the only one in which LL Klink has arrived the day of the disaster. Brown says LL Klink has made a business for itself by being available at the drop of a hat. His cell phone never leaves his side, and he tries to make sure LL Klink always has crew members available to take on spur-of-the-moment jobs.

"We thrive on that phone call," Brown says. "We don't pray for bad weather and we certainly don't create the weather. The weather created us."

Preparation Is Key

All greenhouse owners should have a disaster plan in place for their greenhouses. LL Klink's Shawn Brown offers three steps growers should take immediately after weather disasters strike:

- 1. Check utilities** (gas, electric, water) before entering the structure to restrict further damage;
- 2. Call an emergency responder**, especially if crops are at risk. "You need to know options ahead of time to protect crops and protect customers," Brown says.
- 3. Call your insurance provider** and know your insurance policy provisions ahead of any loss.

LL Klink's goal is make the grower's loss affect production as little as possible. It's the company's job, Brown says, to make sure business is as usual for growers – even if two feet of snow and shards of glass are scattered throughout the greenhouse.

"It's about trying to make the owner comfortable, letting them know we can help and that we're going to put them back together," Brown says. "There are many times we offer that emergency service. If we get the opportunity to rebuild too, great."

LL Klink has provided emergency services to a number of greenhouse operations over the last few years, including Green Circle Growers, N.G. Heimos Greenhouses, Plant Peddler, and Richardson Brothers Greenhouses.

"We had crews at Richardson Brothers finishing up a temporary collapse," Brown says. "The main thing we needed to do was help get these guys through the spring sea-

son without interrupting sales. If we can't permanently repair them, we'll find a way to build something temporary that may not look aesthetically good now, but it's going to get them through until we have time to complete the permanent repairs."

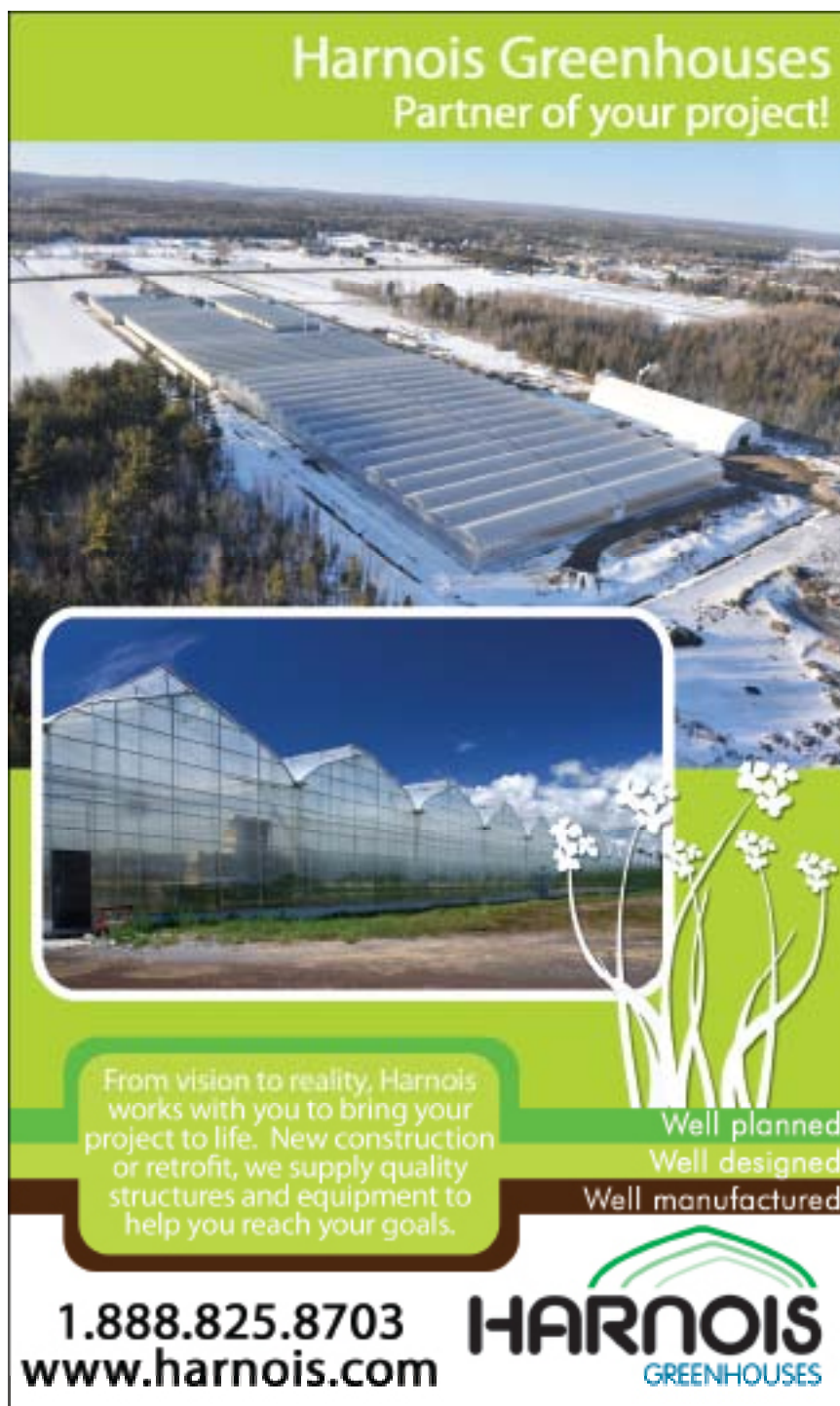
Another repair Brown is particularly proud of is LL Klink's work two summers ago at Colorado's Tagawa Greenhouses,

which sustained considerable damage during a hailstorm.

"Tagawa had 21 days until its young plants were coming in," Brown says. "We re-skinned the house in 19 days. As we finished one section, they were right behind us putting the young plants in."

Learn more about LL Klink online at LLKlink.com.

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