

One-Stop Shop

CASUALTY RECOVERY GROUP CAN MEET ITS CLIENTS' NEEDS QUICKLY AND ACCURATELY. BY LIBBY JOHN

Green and sustainability have been the core focus of Chicago-based Casualty Recovery Group Inc. since it was founded in November 2008. "Even since its inception, that has been our goal," Director and founding partner Tom Nesbitt stresses.

The firm provides reconstruction, restoration and emergency services for commercial, industrial, institutional and residential facilities in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin and Florida that have experienced weather-related damage from tornadoes, wind and hail, as well as water and fire damage. Nesbitt oversees the reconstruction aspect of the projects while his founding partner, Craig Townley, manages the emergency work and other aspects that lead up to reconstruction.

The company is committed to utilizing the most state-of-the-art technology, Nesbitt says. Last year, the company used and tested UV Cure-It flooring coating technology that is used in wood flooring, stone flooring tiles, countertops, concrete countertops and flooring tiles in a range of facilities such as offices, homes, stores, hospitals, operating rooms, gymnasiums, hotel lobbies, restaurants and lounges that emits little to no volatile organic compounds (VOC). The product was manufactured and distributed by CPNA Technologies Inc., and Casualty Recovery Group strives to use it for all its projects if possible.

This product is considered very green friendly, Nesbitt says. Products need a rating of under 250 to be considered green, and UV Cure-It has a rating of 150.

Projects are also completed much quicker with this product, he says. "We can go in the morning, sand and finish the flooring, have the furniture in place, and the floor will as hard as it's ever going to be," he says.

It has received good feedback from customers. "They were very impressed," he notes. "There is virtually no odor. We could literally have been doing a basketball gymnasium on Sunday and they can play on Monday. [Other materials could take] anywhere from two to three days, depending on finished coats."

The company maintains a 12,000-square-foot, state-of-art restoration



Casualty Recovery utilizes UV Cure-It, a flooring coating technology that has little to no VOC.



Casualty Recovery Group Inc.
www.casualty-recovery.com
 • Headquarters: Chicago
 • Employees: 20
 • Services: Reconstruction, restoration and emergency work
"We have a solid business plan with a great marketing and project management team that is supported by a experienced front office."
-Craig Townley, GM

One of Casualty Recovery Group's strengths is its sense of urgency.

The company is staffed with several family members. Matt Townley and Tommy Nesbitt are project managers in their respective areas of expertise. "Both of them are excited with the opportunity to become industry leaders one day," Craig Townley says.

facility in Chicago. The purpose of the site is to clean and store customer goods while their building is being repaired. The warehouse is climate-controlled, insured, and has a security alarm system. If a customer has an emergency and needs to store their property, it is available to them 24/7.

Recent Projects

Casualty Recovery Group recently completed two significant renovations, both as a result of the weather conditions. In August 2009, a tornado ripped through Chesterton, Ind., and the flat roof of an apartment complex along with rooftop HVAC units lifted off and landed on nearby homes. Townley estimated the materials were carried as much as 150 to 200 feet.

Along with replacing the 4,000-square-foot roof and HVAC units, the company also had to replace parts of the exterior masonry walls and the entire truss system. The cost of the project was approximately \$700,000, and took four months to complete after the permit was issued.

"We had to retain the services of a structural engineer and architect in order to perform the work in compliance with state and local codes," he adds.

Casualty Recovery Group also restored a home in Palos Heights, Ill., earlier this year after a water pipe in the attic froze and burst, causing thousands of gallons of water to escape and flood the entire house. The water damage seriously affected all three floors of the custom executive home, Townley says.

"We were called to the home and immediately provided emergency restoration services, water extraction, and moisture control measures," he says. "Those efforts reduced the overall loss substantially. When 5,000 gallons of water inundate a residence, the potential for mold growth is great. Not a single spot of mold was found during the reconstruction process."

"We were able to perform and expedite all the work within three months," he adds. The project was valued at \$200,000.

Economic Benefits

Despite being founded in the beginning of the economic meltdown, Casualty Recovery Group has not been impacted by the recession, and Townley doesn't expect that to change.

In fact, Casualty Recovery Group has benefited from the economic downturn. For example, the company has found it has a wider choice of subcontractors to choose from. "Subs are more readily available, because they are having a difficult time finding work," he says.

"We can find quality vendors a lot easier than five years ago."

"Our requirement and standards [for vendors] are always high," he says. "We require that they be insured and provide the company a certificate of insurance. That, of course, is a standard practice, but we also require they provide evidence of a good financial standing. We also ask that they present themselves professionally, trucks and vans must be in good condition, etc. Their employees must be dressed appropriately, and have good customer service skills."

This helps Casualty Recovery Group meet its commitment to its customers, he adds. The company is approved and recommended by many leading insurance companies nationwide.

Focused on Growth

Being a one-stop solution distinguishes Casualty Recovery Group in the market. "There are a number of companies that do either one side or another side, but we decided to come together and do both," Nesbitt explains.

Growth will continue to be the goal of the firm. "Our next phase would be expansion on a regional basis," Townley says. "We just opened a new location in northwest Indiana, and our next branch would be in the Appleton, Wis., area."

"We like to take baby steps," he adds. "Decisions are not made until all the facts have been examined at least five times over."

Nesbitt doesn't expect the economic conditions to hinder the company's growth, he says. "We have a great business plan, and the list of clients and team members are growing every month," he says.

Future Plans

The company's current client base is comprised of insurance companies and agents, but Townley wants the firm to expand its work with builders and construction companies as well. "Unfortunately there are construction accidents that happen," he explains. "Some of our business partners come from the new construction field, and we feel that we understand the needs and objectives of builders better than most restoration contractors."

One of the company's strengths is its ability to mobilize and respond to a site during urgent times. For example, a five-person crew was able to arrive at the Chesterton project within an hour after the tornado struck. The company was able to provide 20 workers the following morning. "Our No. 1 sales point is our sense of urgency," he says. ♦