

Tuesday, September 14, 2010

Firm provides help to hurricane victims

In the aftermath of Hurricane Alex, Blacksburg-based Portaqua responded by delivering purified water to devastated communities in northern Mexico.

Hurricane Alex entered Mexico near Brownsville, Texas and caused severe flooding in poor rural communities. Within 24 hours of the hurricane's landfall, FEMSA, a leading consumer company in Latin America supplying brands such as Coca-Cola and Powerade to over 215 million consumers, contracted Portaqua to provide emergency water to communities in the rural mountain regions near Monterrey.

Portaqua responded with a trailer water purification unit and Bagua emergency storage pouches.

Portaqua systems and personnel operated from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. to provide water to approximately 10,000 people per day for six weeks.

The water available for treatment came from various sources and contained high levels of suspended solids, agricultural runoff and minerals, according to a release.

Local emergency response agencies also attempted to use standard emergency water filtration plants but due to these contaminants these systems were unsuccessful.

The Portaqua plant operated a total of 46 days without interruption, providing water within one hour of start up.

Portaqua is based at the Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center.