



Arbor Masters Tree & Landscape crews were met with destruction upon arriving in Alabama for storm response work.

Green industry aids tornado devastated areas

From sunup until sundown, for nearly two weeks, Jay Hager and six crews removed tree after tree from house, after house, after house.

Arbor Masters Tree & Landscape employees traveled throughout Alabama from Tuscaloosa to Birmingham to Cullman to Huntsville, cleaning up the destruction and chaos strewn by tornados in late April.

“The first day we were there we were in Tuscaloosa, and just seeing people and families walking around, apparently looking for their stuff – it’s hard to handle, it pulls at you for sure,” said Hager, Arbor Masters’ Ocala, Fla., branch manager.

It’s partly the nature of the business, partly the nature of the people in the green industry, but many companies have stepped up to help communities across the country devastated by the natural disasters that hit this spring.

BASF Corp., which has operations throughout Louisiana, Arkansas and Alabama, contributed \$100,000 to the American Red Cross to help strengthen ongoing tornado and flood relief efforts.

“We strongly believe that it is important to support the communities in which we operate, and with employees

and contractors living in the affected areas, these disasters are extremely personal to us,” Deidra Jackson, BASF communication manager based in Geismar, La., told NBC 33 in Baton Rouge.

HMI deployed more than a dozen tree crews from its Authorized Member Network to assist homeowners in Alabama and Tennessee. Some of those crews were Arbor Masters.

The Shawnee, Kan.-headquartered Arbor Masters is primarily a tree and lawn care company, but assists in debris hauling after large storms. In fact, while its Florida crews were in Alabama, the company’s Oklahoma crews were helping with efforts in their own state.

“It’s very challenging,” Hager said of the emergency storm response work. “The timing is difficult because there are still a lot of power lines down; debris is all over the place. It’s very difficult to get around certain areas driving the big equipment. Getting down the road sometimes is a big challenge and finding paths to the work is difficult. Obviously every day that you’re there it gets better because it’s being cleaned up or put away as the municipality is trying to make things safe. But in general, it’s a challenge.” – *Carolyn LaWell*

