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## Recovery Workers Labor in Wake of Deadly Hurricane Laura in Gulf 2020-08-27 23:03:55.327 GMT

By Prashant Gopal

(Bloomberg) -- Even as Hurricane Laura was still ripping through Southwestern Louisiana, downing trees and power lines and slicing roofs from buildings, Belfor, one of the world's largest property restoration firms, had already dispatched 439 people and 44 tractor-trailer loads of dehumidifiers, generators and construction equipment in its wake. Now it's assessing how much more will be needed.

"We're talking about some very serious winds," said Sheldon Yellen, the chief executive officer of the company that was founded in 1946. "We have many reports of slabs being there with no homes on them. One day there's a home and the next day, no home."

Belfor, which arrives on the scene after wildfires, storms and natural disasters, is helping police remove vehicles and partially downed trees, which are at risk of falling on homes, Yellen said. Workers also are bringing in light towers so that emergency repairs can be done at night. Yellen said it's likely that it will take months for Southwest Louisiana to rebuild. Laura came ashore with 150 mile-per-hour winds, among the most-powerful ever to hit the Gulf Coast, and is still churning northward, throwing off tornadoes in all directions as it moves through Arkansas and beyond. In Lake Charles, Louisiana, it tore commercial buildings apart, set off a chemical fire and damaged casinos, including a riverboat that was stuck under a bridge. Unlike other big storms like Katrina in 2005 in New Orleans and Harvey in 2017 in Houston, this one moved quickly and didn't bring as much flooding, he said. Before it made landfall, meteorologists had warned there could be an "unsurvivable" storm surge.

"Yes, it could have been worse but to those directly affected, it's as bad as it gets," Yellen said.

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