

# TOSHIBA PHONE SYSTEMS ARE TORNADO-TOUGH

*ON A WILD AUGUST NIGHT IN WISCONSIN, 131 TOSHIBA PHONE SYSTEMS FACE A CLASSIC MIDWESTERN U.S. CHALLENGE — AND WIN.*

In the early morning hours of August 7, 2013, a series of “super-storms” — including six confirmed tornadoes — raced across northeast Wisconsin, USA. Meteorologists called it a quasi-linear convective system — fancy language for *bad*. Tornadoes in such systems move fast (these came through at 70mph) and are wrapped in heavy rain. In 45 terrifying minutes, the tornadoes and accompanying straight-line winds damaged hundreds of homes and businesses, downed thousands of trees and power lines, and left tens of thousands of people without power.

In the small rural community of Greenleaf, Wisconsin, Tim Trudell and Chad Gehrke, the owners of Complete Auto Body, arrived at work to find half of their building destroyed. Phone system wiring and paging speakers had been ripped from the walls. Many phones were destroyed — or simply gone.



Their immediate concern was how the business they built around timely automotive services and a responsive customer experience would continue to operate without disruption. How would customers reach them? How would they effectively mobilize the restoration effort and communicate with vendors?

Those concerns were short-lived. When power was restored to the area the next day, Trudell and Gehrke were pleasantly surprised when, amid the destruction, the phones started to ring. Even after storms powerful enough to bend steel and dismantle walls and roofs, their Toshiba phone system was still working.

Fred Stoeger of Unitel — an Authorized Toshiba Dealer since 1983 — came from the Appleton, Wisconsin, office to assess the damage and determine what it would take to replace the missing phones

and bring the phone network back to its original state. He was given a memento of the storm: a wall phone that had been found among the debris, covered in dirt and insulation.



He brought it back to the office to show the staff, and they decided to plug it in to see if it still worked.

It worked. The phone had withstood 120mph winds, heavy rain and being tossed around, and it was still completely operational.



Unitel Inc. had approximately 131 Toshiba customer systems in the area affected by the tornadoes. After contacting customers in the storm zone, Unitel representatives learned that all of those systems had powered-up normally when electricity was restored to the area. **Of 131 systems, not a single one had to be replaced.**

Toshiba systems have always been given high industry ratings for reliability. Now we can add “tornado-tested, tornado-tough” to those credentials. Final score: Tornadoes 0 — Toshiba 131.

“It makes you feel good about the equipment we are providing to our customers,” said Brian Metherell, VP and General Manager of Toshiba America’s Telecommunication Systems Division. “We hope our customers don’t have to put their Strata CIX and IPedge phone systems to the tornado test, but we’re glad to know the equipment will fare well if they do.”