



The Bottom Line

www.jacksontn.com • Business News From The Chamber • June/July 2003

CHAMBER MEMBER
BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

Aeneas rises from the rubble

By MELISSA SHELTON
Chamber Intern

The tornado that swept through Jackson on Sunday, May 4, destroyed many things in its path. No one can relate to this type of destruction better than Jonathan Harlan, CEO of Aeneas Internet and Telephone.

The Aeneas building at 301 S. Church St. was completely demolished that night.

"This tragedy has reminded all businesses in West Tennessee of the importance of network redundancy and off site file storage," Harlan said.

Aeneas Internet and Telephone is Tennessee's only facilities-based Internet service provider/competitive local exchange carrier. Aeneas prides itself on friendly service and affordable rates emphasizing the value of customer service, Harlan said.

Within 23 hours after the storm, Aeneas's team restored customer e-mail, domain name (DNS) and www-dot services. Thirty-three hours after the storm, broadband Internet service was restored.

On May 6, Aeneas set up temporary offices at 301 E. Lafayette St. in Jackson and had re-established service for its large business customers.

By the beginning of June, the company had moved to a second temporary location at 105 S. Missouri St. in Bemis until construction plans for a new building are finalized, Harlan said.

Because of Aeneas's diversified telecommunications network small businesses and residential telephone was never impacted, Harlan said.

"Our small businesses were never affected because we spared no expense in being reliable," Harlan said. "You have to have a disaster recovery plan, and we did."

Redundancy and reliability were at the beginning of Aeneas' disaster recovery plan. Aeneas telephone service is connected to the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) with synchronous optical network (SONET) topology rings - thus giving a plan for rerouting backup data and hardware.

In a letter written to Aeneas, David Espinoza, chief financial officer, Millington



Photo courtesy of Aeneas

Telephone writes, "Life has a way of bringing things to us that we don't understand or have control over. It is how we respond to them that shows our true character. From the articles I have read you made A+ on your exam. Your business is more firmly established because of this hardship. The relationships forged by these circumstances will only strengthen you for the future. Well done good friend."

Aeneas continues to restore service to all of its customers.

"We're thankful for how patient our customers have been," Harlan said.

Future plans for Aeneas are continued

Aeneas Internet and Telephone is temporarily located at 105 S. Missouri St. in Bemis. For more information, call (731) 554-9200 or visit www.aeneas.net.

service focusing on its customers as well as designing a new marketing plan to create more Aeneas Internet and Telephone users, Harlan said.

Many companies aided in the recovery, including Worldspice in Memphis, PCHNet in Brownsville and BellSouth.

"I want to thank all those who helped Aeneas regain service," Harlan said. "I especially want to thank the staff. I have the finest group of employees in Tennessee. They are people that have given so much of themselves and their time."