Tropical Storm Debby pounded the Florida panhandle from Sunday, June 24 through Tuesday, June 26, 2012 with an intense complex of thunderstorms, torrential rains, and gusts up to 65 miles per hour. Many coastal areas received rainfall in excess of 15 inches, resulting in widespread flash flooding and power outages. Eastpoint was hit hard by the rains and winds, several areas are still without power, and the power company is struggling to restore power.

St. George Island, adjacent to Eastpoint, continues to experience a major power outage and is still under a mandatory evacuation. The bridge is closed by the state patrol due to high water and loss of power. Residents and tourists returning to the island are being asked to come and go quickly.

At the same time Governor Rick Scott was declaring a state of emergency mid-Monday June 25, 2012 for Tropical Storm Debby, Florida Rural Water Association was delivering a 60 kW generator to Eastpoint Water & Sewer District.

Gary Williams, Florida Rural Water Association (FRWA) Executive Director, acted first thing Monday at the request of the Eastpoint Administrator, George Allen, to get resources into the impacted area – 75 miles south of Tallahassee FL. The 60 kW generator (weighing 4,000 lbs) was delivered to Eastpoint Water & Sewer District by Sterling Carroll, FRWA Engineer during the middle of the storm.

Conditions to connect the generator were not ideal. Eastpoint personnel had to stand in the sheeting rain and wind gusts during the operation and wiring. The generator was safely connected by Clay Moore, supervisor & chief wastewater treatment plant operator, and Eastpoint personnel Derek Henry, Brian Taylor, and Levi Odom. Also assisting was Charlie Painter contract operator.

This incident is just one example of many others where FRWA rapidly responds and assists water and wastewater systems during emergencies.

FRWA is part of the FlaWARN and the State Emergency Response Team (SERT). Its focus is to assist water and wastewater systems in the event of emergencies and during normal operations. Any of FRWA’s staff may be called on to help in the event of hurricanes, emergencies, or disaster response.