

BY LAUREN PINCH

As the muddy floodwaters subsided, images of a drowned city were quickly replaced by images of an industrious one. Nashville businesses and residents rapidly began the cleanup and recovery process after the devastating floods of May 1 and 2, pitching in to rebuild and lend their neighbors a hand. Although overwhelmed and saddened by the destruction, everyone's first question seemed to be: How can I help? >>

REBUILDING MUSIC CITY USA

NASHVILLE
CONTRACTORS
TAKE CENTER
STAGE IN FLOOD
RECOVERY
EFFORT

Floodwaters rose 4 feet above the Grand Ole Opry House stage on May 3. By May 7, the remediation process was under way (right).

GAYLORD ENTERTAINMENT (3)

Now that initial remediation and demolition efforts are nearly complete, contractors are moving full steam ahead on rebuilding the skeletons of hundreds of waterlogged commercial buildings. A glimmer of good news for Nashvillians: The work is mostly local, and it's happening fast.



The Metro Codes Department has issued more than 3,000 building permits to catch up with a backlog of 11,000 properties damaged by the flood.

Three major landmarks are well on their way to showcasing stronger, more robust spaces that exceed the buildings' original grandeur. Renovations to the Schermerhorn Symphony Center will be complete in December, including new elevators, communications systems, and basement-level HVAC, electrical and mechanical systems. At the Gaylord Opryland Resort, a massive overhaul of the lobbies, signature

restaurants and several guestrooms will be complete in November. The Grand Ole Opry House will reopen next month.

Here's the story of how several stand-out construction companies called upon their patience, experience and ingenuity to help local businesses rise out of a tragic disaster.

BRINGING THE SYMPHONY BACK TO MUSIC CITY

Alan Valentine, president and CEO of the Nashville Symphony Orchestra, didn't start to worry about the rising floodwaters until Sunday night, May 2. Like many other leaders of local companies and institutions, he tried to carry on with business as usual, hoping the worst wouldn't happen. The night before, the symphony hosted its scheduled concert, Mahler's Symphony No. 5, despite water beginning to seep into the basement. On Sunday morning, it hosted auditions for principal oboe, with musicians visiting from all over the world to vie for the coveted chair. While the Schermerhorn Symphony Center wasn't technically located in the map of the flood plain, the waters rose nonetheless.

Just after the oboe auditions finished, Nashville Electric Service gave symphony



The Schermerhorn Symphony Center, a world-class music venue (pictured here and below before the flood), sustained \$40 million in damages.

staff just five minutes' notice that it was about to shut off the symphony hall's power. The backup generators kicked on, but the stage lifts—one for a grand piano and another spanning the front of the stage—were not on the emergency power system. Neither were the eight steel chair wagons weighing more than 90,000 pounds each, which can be motorized to conceal theater seats and reveal hardwood ballroom flooring.

Without a way to lift equipment from the basement, or to extract materials by flipping the chair wagons, Valentine knew trouble was on the way.

The river crested at 52 feet on Monday evening, May 3, causing the water table to rise. The force of the water cracked

the floor slab of the Schermerhorn, filling the 2-story subbasement with 22 feet of water.

This is where 10 of the symphony hall's 11 massive air handlers—designed to mask airflow noise and help create pristine sound conditions above—were housed. Electrical switchgear, commercial kitchen equipment, banquet tables and chairs, custom-made musical instruments, the console for a 3,568-pipe organ and the elevator systems also were located on the basement level.

The Nashville Symphony estimates the total damages at \$40 million for cleanup, remediation, debris removal and reconstruction, as well as lost business.

