

Our Town News ON THE WEB



Purchase of Battery-operated Portable Traffic Lights Helps Coral Springs After Wilma

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by [Jonathan Del Marcus](#)

Then Hurricane Wilma's winds damaged countless street lights throughout South Florida, the City of Coral Springs' purchase of innovative, battery operated, portable street light assemblies made the difference in its ability to get traffic moving as quickly and as safely as possible.

"Due to Hurricane Wilma, we lost electricity and power at most of the intersections, and the city had a need to conduct traffic in a safe manner. We were using police officers to direct traffic. However, they were putting their lives in danger, especially at night because of the dimly lit intersections," said Roxanne Sookdeo, purchasing agent, Financial Services Department, City of Coral Springs.

"The day after the storm, Angelo (Angelo Salomone, a purchasing administrator with the Financial Services Department, City of Coral Spring) came in with a brochure that the city's public works director, Dwight Weddington, had seen from a company called IST International in Cincinnati, Ohio www.IntelligentSignals.com 1-866-466-4784," Sookdeo recalled. "I did some research online and then contacted the company. They had one complete unit available. I gave Angelo the information, we contacted the chief of police, and we got the go-ahead to purchase the one traffic light."

Coral Springs purchased one traffic light assembly from IST International for \$10,300. After monitoring its performance for a few days, the city purchased another 10 units with solar panels to recharge the batteries for \$99,638. Within days, the city received six of the 10 it had ordered.

"We were really happy with their performance. The biggest things we saw were that the traffic lights allowed us to put our resources elsewhere and to deploy our officers where they were most needed, and they allowed us to remove our officers from the intersections at night where they were at risk of being injured," said Duncan Foster, police chief, City of Coral Springs' Police Department.

The city will be filing a claim for reimbursement from the Federal Emergency Management Agency of \$87,000 of the total cost of the 11 units, Salomone said. When and if FEMA pays the claim, the city's actual out-of-pocket cost could be as small as approximately \$12,000, he said.

"Although they are expensive, we believe that in the long run they will prove themselves beyond a doubt and be worth their weight in gold. We think they're a very worthwhile investment," Foster said.