

Even after a  
tornado destroys its offices,  
Kim Dupree State Farm can

help

its clients  
thanks to AT&T Fiber

- **Business needs** - Hoping for the best but preparing for the worst led Kim Dupree State Farm to seek a solution that would keep the team connected to clients, especially after a disaster when people need immediate help.
- **Networking solution** - Kim Dupree State Farm added AT&T Business Fiber with Voice bundle for highly reliable connectivity to help policyholders reach the office, even after a tornado, flood, or other unexpected event.
- **Business value** - Highly reliable, flexible AT&T services enabled Kim Dupree's clients to reach the insurance agency, even after its offices were destroyed by a savage tornado.
- **Industry focus** - Insurance and financial planning
- **Size** - 3,200 customers

## About Kim Dupree State Farm

Kim Dupree State Farm Insurance Agency works hard to be northeast Louisiana's first choice for insurance. Dupree and her team try to establish personal relationships with customers and help them understand the risks people face every day. The agency focuses on insurance products that cover home, rental, life, health and business/commercial concerns. When the unfortunate occurs, Dupree and her team pledge to be there to assist.

## The situation

When the unexpected occurs, insurance can help people pick up the pieces and move on. Kim Dupree State Farm Insurance Agency needed a better way for her clients to connect with her, especially in the wake of a flood, fire, accident, or other disaster.

## Solution

AT&T Business Fiber with Voice bundle is a high-performing service that keeps Kim Dupree State Farm connected to its policyholders. The flexible services are built on AT&T Fiber technology, which powers ultra-fast upload and download speeds and supplies the plentiful bandwidth and flexibility the company requires.

## “Everybody’s important, no matter what”

Insurance agencies have changed dramatically over the last decade. Today’s consumers expect personalized insurance coverage rather than one-size-fits-all products, and many expect their agency to be able to handle all their insurance and financial needs.

Kim Dupree became a State Farm agent so she could satisfy these demands in northeast Louisiana. In addition to offering traditional products like auto, home, life, and health insurance, Dupree is also a State Farm bank, providing checking, savings, mortgages, vehicle loans, and investment advice. “We’re pretty much a one-stop-shop now, for just about any financial need or insurance need,” she said.

Her team of 10 includes acquisition service people and a part-time telemarketer. Her husband handles the company’s financials, in addition to holding down another full-time job. Together the team serves a diverse customer base that includes 18-year-olds insuring their first car or apartment as well as business owners and retirees who need multiple kinds of insurance.



“My motto here is, ‘Everybody is important, no matter what,’” Dupree says. “From somebody that just has one auto all the way to somebody that’s got a huge book of business, we’re here to help everybody and treat everyone well.” Dupree’s philosophy aligns with State Farm’s motto: “Like a good neighbor, State Farm is there.”

## Going above and beyond what’s expected

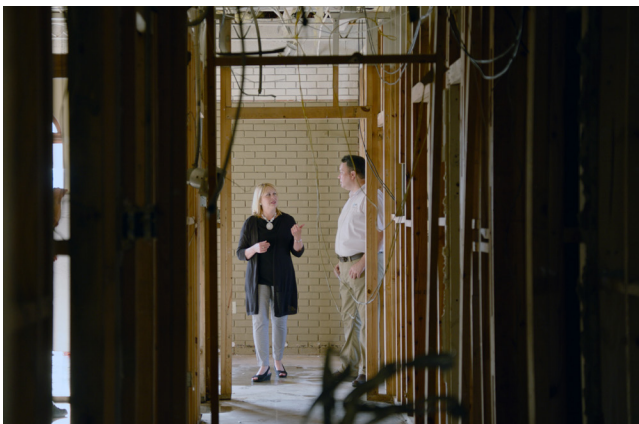
Dupree became a State Farm agent because her family has been insured by the company since she was a child. “State Farm has been in my blood ever since I can remember,” she said. Her son has been a State Farm agent for 14 years. In preparation for her own career in insurance, Dupree earned a degree in financial services and retirement planning. In 2014, she opened her own State Farm Agency in the small town of Ruston, Louisiana.

Her business is thriving because of the effort that she and her team put into the agency. “We have a good work ethic; we’re dedicated to keeping up with

everything and hiring a good team, because your team is your lifeblood,” she said. “We’re creating a culture that gives everyone who walks through our door the best experience.”

As part of its hospitality, the agency even offers refreshments to visitors. “We want to differentiate ourselves from the other agencies that are out there,” she said. The company also sets itself apart by going above and beyond what’s expected. “As a courtesy, if someone is late on a payment, we let them know we don’t want anything adverse to happen, so we encourage them to be sure and get their payment in by the due date. Like I said, everybody is important, and everybody deserves the same type of treatment.”

In addition to building strong relationships with customers, Dupree has earned numerous awards and recognition, including the State Farm Chairman’s Circle, Ambassador Travel and Senior Vice President’s Club. “The rewards aren’t as important to me as doing what’s right,” Dupree said. “You do what’s right and the rest follows.”



## Like a good neighbor

Insurance is all about hoping for the best but preparing for the worst. Dupree extended this viewpoint to running her business. After experiencing some static and other problems with her phone service, which consisted of T1 and POTS lines, Dupree replaced it with an AT&T Dedicated Voice and Internet bundle, high-performing services built on fast and highly reliable AT&T Fiber technology. Dupree chose AT&T Fiber to keep her agency better connected to its policyholders.

Maintaining this link is vital for an insurance company, especially when disaster strikes—and it strikes often in Louisiana. Heavy rains cause floods every year, and the state has seen more than its share of devastating hurricanes and tornadoes.

“The move was seamless,” Dupree said. “Going from the T1 to AT&T Fiber was great. We never had another issue with static or anything else. Our phones and computers just ran great.”

Even more important than the outstanding service, she said, was knowing that she would be accessible whenever her clients needed her help. “I appreciate the confidence I get from knowing that the system will be there without the issues and problems of our former system,” she said.

Little did Dupree suspect how important her communications system would be when disaster struck close to home.

## Staying available to clients, even after a tornado

Just a year and four months after Dupree upgraded to AT&T Business Fiber, her town of Ruston was devastated by an EF-3 tornado that killed two residents and caused \$9.1 million in property damages. Tornadoes of this magnitude have sustained winds of 135 to 165 miles per hour.

The Kim Dupree State Farm office took a direct hit. “My office was pretty much destroyed,” Kim said. “The whole back wall and the roof were gone. The windows blew in completely and there was glass and insulation everywhere. It was terrible.”

But life must go on, especially when your job is helping others to deal with the aftermath of disasters. Within a day Dupree had packed up her files and furniture, rented a new office and hired movers. The only problem was being available to help her customers who had also suffered losses. She was able to move to her new office in a day, but soon learned that the new building’s phone lines had been knocked out by the tornado. “I was worried about how to get

my computers and phones back up and running so people could reach us,” she said.

Before she could even contact AT&T for help, her account representative appeared with a solution. He pulled together AT&T technicians who delivered a generator and a portable system on wheels. He also ordered new telephone lines for Kim Dupree State Farm. Because she had been switched to AT&T Business Fiber with Voice bundle, she was able to make changes to her phone system through a secure customer portal.

“I was able to control how my numbers operated. I logged in and remotely call-forwarded my main number to the number for the phone lines that were installed in the new building,” she said. While other businesses remained shuttered, Kim Dupree State Farm was up and running four business days after the tornado struck.

Dupree was also appreciative that her AT&T cellphones worked throughout and after the storm. “I have five wireless lines through AT&T, and, oh my gosh, I never lost my cell phone service. I know others did, but I never lost service,” she said.

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**Kim Dupree**

Owner, Kim Dupree State Farm



## Supporting mission-critical communications

Dupree said AT&T takes care of its customers the way she takes care of her own. “The outages were everywhere. I saw AT&T trucks everywhere, and I knew they were helping other people,” Dupree said. “And yet, I felt like I was the only one they were having to help. I knew that that was not true, but my account rep figured out what we needed and became my one-stop-shop. It’s just been amazing.”

Her account team understood that Dupree’s customers who had been affected by the tornado

needed to contact Dupree, and the account team did everything possible to restore the mission-critical communications.

She said she would not hesitate to recommend AT&T service to her colleagues and friends. “This whole thing’s been very hard. I mean, I still feel like I’ve got a little hole in my heart from this storm,” Dupree said.

“But having AT&T made such a big difference,” she added. “I just can’t tell you how strongly I feel about it. I absolutely do not know what I would have done otherwise.”

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