



FEMA

Staying High and Dry Elevated Richmond Restaurant

Richmond, VA - When the owners of a new Buffalo Wild Wings Grill and Bar franchise considered opening in the historic Shockoe Bottom entertainment district, they knew the area was prone to flooding. Their decision to make the building flood resistant soon paid off.

The new restaurant opened a little more than a year before Tropical Storm Gaston came on August 30, 2004. The flood reached 8 to 10 feet above street level in some areas. It damaged 48 businesses and left many people homeless.

But Buffalo Wild Wings sustained only minor water damage and was ready to reopen in 4 days. Their initial investment of \$130,000 protected over a million dollars in capital and untold revenue.

The owners had decided to build up the floor 5 feet. They took the fuse boxes, the hot water heater and the air conditioner compressor from the original ground floor and moved them to the modified floor, the top floor and the roof.

Renovating the entire building cost about \$1.3 million, with the floor modification accounting for about 10 percent of the total, according to Steve Green, the manager on duty when the flood hit. "That 10 percent saved the other 90," he said. "We decided to go with a concrete floor in the bar, even though the standard for [a] Buffalo Wild Wings (franchise) is a wood floor," said Green. "If we had wood floors, there definitely would have been more damage."

The restaurant just had to hose the mud off the concrete floor in the bar and clean the carpet in the main dining room to get back in business. "The total cost to get the restaurant ready for business after the flood was less than \$5,000, and most of that was for labor," Green said.

Although the restaurant fared well, Green personally did not. "I lost my car, and so did my assistant manager," he said. Other establishments near Buffalo Wild Wings did not fare well, either. A popular pizza place, just a block away, is in near ruins after the flood.

"I think they were underinsured," Green said. "It's going to be tough for them (to recover)."



**Richmond City,
Virginia**



Quick Facts

Sector:

Private

Cost:

\$130,000.00 (Estimated)

Primary Activity/Project:

Elevation, Structural

Primary Funding:

Property Owner, Commercial