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State-of-the-art communications for Mishawaka: The all-in-one mission critical solution

"Communications is a critical investment, one of the biggest expenses a city will undertake. We need to update technology because a smarter police officer is a safer police officer. Overall, we are very excited about the new system and the tax dollars are well spent."

– Mayor Jeff Rea, Mishawaka, Indiana

Mishawaka looked to its mission statement: Working together to build the best hometown in America. The answer was to invest in a solution where all the individual pieces worked together.

Situation: A mid-sized city looking for the smartest investment

Mishawaka, Indiana, is a growing commercial city with close ties to neighboring South Bend and the University of Notre Dame. The city's voice radio system was aging, with parts availability becoming a concern, and inadequate radio coverage in some areas. Mishawaka's leaders recognized that a new Project 25 system would enable them to take advantage of emerging technologies that promise to help public safety personnel work safely and effectively.

Choosing the right solution was key. "Have the right team with different expertise," explains Mayor Jeff Rea on the process to select the right solution. "It is the most important piece of technology we own and a critical investment." The city realized it could have it all—but not necessarily all at once. "One of the hard challenges is that we want all the features, but we need to pay for it over time. With Motorola, it was truly a good partnership. We have a great system."

Solution: One platform for voice and data; one vendor to call

A Motorola ASTRO®25 system with HPD data provides a solid, expandable foundation for all of the city's mission critical wireless voice and data communications. "Two systems work together as one," says system technologist Brian Billingsley. "Having a P25 system has allowed us to do so many more things." The city has already benefited from improved voice coverage and mobile data.

"The biggest challenge," says Mayor Rea, "was the additional system tools and the ongoing maintenance." To complete the picture, Motorola provides a suite of applications including records management, geographical information and computer-aided dispatch integrated with Mishawaka's IT systems. Plus, Motorola provides a range of services including 24x7 network monitoring from the Motorola Network Operation Center in Schaumburg, IL, and local support from Motorola-certified partner Tele-RAD, Inc. Thanks to their efforts and the redundancy built into the network's design, Mishawaka enjoys 99.5% voice system uptime… so first responders can count on their radios and mobile computers to keep working when lives are on the line.

Mishawaka, Indiana
- Population: 49,000
- Covers 17 square miles
- 103 police officers and 35 support personnel
- 108 fire and EMS personnel

Solution
- ASTRO®25 system
- 10 channels: 8 voice, 2 data
- Fully redundant 3 site simulcast voice system
- 2 site HPD overlay system

Data Applications
- CAD dispatch
- Car-to-car messaging,
- AVL vehicle location,
- Mapping
- Mobile access to regional databases including Indiana Eticket & Ecrash
- NetRMS records management
- Fire Station Alert (FSA) system

Voice is the first line of communications

ASTRO 25 gives Mishawaka a digital voice platform it won't outgrow, with the benefits of Project 25 (P25) compliance.

"With the digital system, coverage inside buildings is great," says Assistant Fire Chief Greg Hunt. "On the fireground it's great to be on the trunked system because we can take voice recordings and later critique the calls of every working fire."

Better information supports better decisions

"The guys working the beat receive so much more information through dispatch now," says Haimbaugh. "No one wants to go through long dissertations over the radio." Instead, data sent directly to laptop screens guides responders to the right destinations and gives them an idea of what to expect when they get there. Dispatchers see real-time vehicle locations so they can send the nearest unit for fastest response.

Fire uses many of the same applications as police. "Premise history such as criminal offenses, vicious dogs, whether there are guns in the house; that information is important to firefighters", says Chief Hunt. In addition he goes on to say. "If they use the mapping and hydrant location data properly it can save a step or two, making them more efficient."

Remote reporting saves time and money

Personnel can now file "paperwork" from their vehicles instead of traveling back to the station. This allows officers to spend more time on the street. Steve Ravotto, Assistant Chief of the Public Safety Records Department, sees other benefits as well. "In the past we had secretaries doing data entry and there might be a few hours' delay. Now everything is updated as soon as the officers are reporting. I was able to reduce my civilian staff as a result. When the

press or a citizen comes into the station, the ability to search for a report allows me as an administrator to be very efficient in answering their questions."

Secure encryption satisfies privacy requirements

"One of the things we like about the system is that it's all encrypted," says Haimbaugh. All data channels and four of the six voice channels use FIPS certified encryption to prevent unauthorized access. One voice channel is left open and another unencrypted channel is used for mutual aid. "We meet all of the HIPAA and CJIS requirements. If dispatchers need to send sensitive information, they ask officers to move to an encrypted channel."

Expert assistance keeps the network running

"I want someone watching over the system all of the time and we did not have a dedicated person to do that," says Haimbaugh. "Having Motorola Network Operations monitor the system is a better use of our time. The Motorola Network Operations Center sends us an email if there are issues."

The system is very stable," says Aaron Newman the system technician from the Motorola service provider, Tele-RAD Inc. "there is so much redundancy built into the system."

A trusted partner for public safety

With deep expertise and experience in the public sector, Motorola understands that radios are a lifeline for first responders and the citizens they protect. Motorola's portfolio of mission critical systems is designed to help public safety agencies confidently take the next step forward in their voice and data communications. For more information about ASTRO 25 systems and Motorola's ability to address your community's communication needs, visit our website at motorola.com/ASTRO25.

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