

Mishawaka's finest use mission critical mobile data to work faster and smarter



"It is critical to equip our police and firefighters with the right technology. The public expects it. A first responder is safer as he goes to the door of a house if he better understands what is going on."

– Mayor Jeff Rea

"The more data we make available to officers when they're working the beat, the more comfortable they will be going into a situation—and once they get there, they will be able to make better decisions."

– Russ Haimbaugh, Mishawaka, Indiana NetRMS Administrator

Situation: Leveraging investments to work harder for public safety

Mishawaka's leaders made the decision to invest in the future of their growing city by deploying a Motorola ASTRO®25 wireless voice and HPD dedicated data system. The Project 25 voice network replaced an aging voice radio system while the HPD system provides mobile data coverage across the city. An important factor in their decision was the ability of the ASTRO 25 platform to gradually adapt to new capabilities.

"You only have one opportunity to do it right," says Brian Billingsley, a system technologist for the city. "Make sure what you are investing in will meet your needs." One of the needs Mishawaka identified was to provide personnel in the field with greater access to data—maps, records, vehicle locations, premises histories, and more. "With more information, it increases the chances of catching the bad guys," Billingsley says.

Solution: More bandwidth to support critical applications

The HPD overlay works with the ASTRO 25 infrastructure, providing the mobility to run data-intensive applications from anywhere in the citywide coverage area. Three Wi-Fi hotspots provide localized higher bandwidth coverage in critical areas. Tying it all together, the Radio IP middleware application handles seamless roaming across networks and provides an extra layer of security and encryption.

To promote situational awareness, fast response and efficient use of available resources, Mishawaka has deployed a variety of Motorola applications. These include MotorolaCAD, MobileCAD and PremierMDC for vehicles in the field, NetRMS records management, geographical information systems (GIS) and automatic vehicle location (AVL). The fire/EMS service uses many of these same applications in addition to fireground advance tactical status and a Motorola Fire Station Alert system.

Mishawaka, Indiana Public Safety

- City population: 49,000
- Land area: 17 square miles

Motorola Solution

- ASTRO®25 system with HPD overlay
- Wi-Fi hotspots
- Radio IP middleware application

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



"Keeping officers out on the street—instead of coming in to the station to fill out reports or look something up—definitely improves efficiency. It saves time and allows them to respond faster when there's a call. If an officer is in the field, even if he is in a parking lot writing a report, he still has a presence in the community. The citizens feel better when officers stay on the beat."

– Steve Ravotto, Assistant Chief of the Public Safety Records Department



Dispatch and data sharing

"Dispatchers send data to officers in the field," says Billingsley. "The information is right in front of them on the vehicle's laptop screen. Officers don't have to concentrate on driving while writing on a note pad."

"In the past we had to rely on the dispatcher to look up hydrant locations," adds Assistant Fire Chief Greg Hunt. "Now maps and hydrant locations are accessible from the front of the truck."

Russ Haimbaugh says, "Street guys receive so much more information on their way to the call. Cross streets can pop up if you need directions to the scene. Officers can look up information without having to tie up voice traffic or drive to the station. It's a huge timesaver. Another great feature is car-to-car messaging; officers can quickly share information with other officers on duty."

Premise history

"Premise history is becoming more important," says Haimbaugh. "The officer pushes a button and gets information we have on file about a location: past criminal offenses, vicious dogs, suspicious persons, and so on. It gives officers more situational awareness on the way to a call. The more information you give them the better off everyone is."

"Fire shares the same location database as police," says Chief Hunt. "For example hazardous materials are relevant, but so would a notice of guns in the house. It's important for firefighters to know all of the information we can about a location."

Records management and remote reporting

"Before we had a data system," Haimbaugh remembers, "an officer would drive down to the station and fill out a report. If you were busy you might wait a couple of hours and have two or three reports to do. There was no traceability, no accountability."

Now, officers file routine "paperwork" from their vehicle computers. They spend less time at the station and information gets into the system in a timely and accurate manner.

Automated data reporting also helps to make shift changes more efficient. "Officers like using the query function to gain information," says Billingsley. "In the past they would have stacks of notes on the podium before the next shift and notes would often get lost in the shuffle. Now the system lets us pull information efficiently."

Encryption meets privacy requirements

"One of the things we like about Radio IP is that it's all encrypted across the data channel, whether or not the individual applications support encryption," says Haimbaugh. "We are way ahead of the game" for passing CJIS and NCIC audits and complying with HIPAA regulations.

Roaming across HPD and Wi-Fi

Radio IP manages handoffs between HPD and Wi-Fi systems so the entire process is transparent to users. "Officers don't have to do anything. The roaming is seamless," says Haimbaugh.

In situations where applications require greater bandwidth than HPD can provide, officers can utilize the Wi-Fi hotspots when the vehicle is within range. Such is the case with uploading reports from the Indiana ECrash and ETicket applications. Mishawaka can flexibly reconfigure Radio IP to manage which types of data are carried on which networks to ensure that bandwidth is available for high-priority traffic.

For more information about how Motorola can help you take advantage of this technology in your community, visit our website at motorola.com/ASTRO25.



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