NICE®
Intent. Insight. Impact.™

CUSTOMER INDUSTRY:

Public Safety and Emergency Services

WEBSITE:

www.yorkcountypa.gov

LOCATION:

Yorktown, Virginia, USA

BUSINESS NEED:

Replace outdated facility with a modern 9-1-1 center and upgraded radio and recording solutions

NICE SOLUTIONS:

- NICE Recording

THE IMPACT:

- A turnkey solution for trunked radio communications and recording from a single vendor

ON THE NICE SOLUTION

"More than ever, the recording and radio solutions need to be tightly integrated. Sourcing the equipment through one vendor made it easier for us and gave us more confidence in our solution decision."

Terry Hall, communications manager

COUNTY OF YORK
DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

ABOUT YORK COUNTY COMMUNICATIONS CENTER

"We knew the type of radio system we wanted, but it was going to be very expensive," said Hall. "Without banding together with James City County, neither one of us would have been able to do what we did without the other. The collaboration saved the Counties millions of dollars."

Part of the Norfolk-Virginia Beach-Newport News Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), York County is located on the Virginia Peninsula between the James and York Rivers. The County's 911 center handles approximately 250,000 calls per year, dispatching fire, EMS and police services for 65,000 County residents, four local military installations, and a continuous influx of tourists and visitors.

THE CHALLENGE

In an increasingly cash-strapped economy, public safety agencies are looking for ways to stretch limited budgets and funding. At the same time, the post 9/11 era has brought interoperability to the forefront of the national public safety agenda, and agencies are recognizing that investing in new technology that improves coordination and communication is imperative. Balancing these conflicting priorities can be a tough act, but local governments are devising creative solutions so neither public safety nor fiscal responsibility falls by the wayside.

In 2002, the York County embarked on a three-year plan to replace an outgrown facility with a completely modern 911 center. At the same time, the County saw a critical need to upgrade its 911 systems, radio equipment and recording technology. According to Terry Hall, communications manager for York County, everything barring the paper shredder was slated for replacement. The only problem was figuring out how to afford it all.

THE SOLUTION

The solution to York County's problem was as close as "next door," in neighboring James City County. Realizing they had similar needs, the two Counties banded together to purchase technology that they would share – a Motorola radio system and NICE emergency communications management solution.

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The entire process took about two years from start to finish. The two Counties worked as a team to scope out requirements for the system and then acquire and test the equipment. Hall elaborates: "We formed a regional consortium with James City County and a policy team that included our respective county administrators, chief financial officers, and project managers." The consortium opted to purchase a turnkey solution for trunked radio communications and recording from a single vendor, Motorola. Hall explains why: "More than ever, the recording and radio solution need to be tightly integrated," he said. "Sourcing the equipment through one vendor made it easier for us and gave us more confidence in our solution decision." The consortium's efforts, hard work, and investments paid off on April 1, 2005, when the new York County 911 center, resplendent with all of its new technology, went live without virtually a hiccup or hitch. James City County's new 911 center is slated to open in January 2006.

The Counties' radio system of choice was Motorola's ASTRO digital simulcast 6.5 radio solution. It provided state-of-the-art secure encryption and P25-compatibility to promote interoperability and seamless communication - both important features for York and neighboring James City County. The solution from NICE is fully integrated with the radio system and currently records 350 talkgroups, in addition to telephone lines, and some conventional radio channels as well. York is designated as the "prime site" for the recording system which means that the actual physical recorders and hard drives (on which the recordings are archived) reside at the York center.

Another benefit of the Counties' NICE recording solution is its ability to do what Hall calls "trunk tracking," or essentially capturing trunked radio data from the ATIA (Air Traffic Information Access) component of the radio system. Data such as radio ID, talkgroup ID, start time, and end time is captured for each radio transmission. Capturing this data is essential from the standpoint of being able to piece transmissions together during playback, due to the dynamic nature in which the trunked radio system assigns users to channels.

This integration between the trunked radio and recording system provides productivity benefits as well. Hall elaborates: "In the old days, if you got a call from someone doing an investigation on an accident or a specific incident, and they wanted all the radio traffic from unit 32, you'd have to go back and listen to everyone's radio traffic. Our new system gives us the ability to search by unit ID. We're able to zero in and set whatever parameters we want so we can listen to what we want."

According to Hall, the implementation of the radio/recording solution has been so successful that other government organizations are jumping on board to take advantage of the bandwidth. "It's working so well that the City of Williamsburg and the National Park Service have now joined us; and we're currently in negotiations with the College of William and Mary." Hall is also working on a project that will tie all of the area hospitals into the regional microwave network to facilitate improved interoperability and communication.

"We'll be able to better formulate emergency responses in times of disaster," he says, and even though everyone will be saving money in the process, there's nothing that could possibly be more important than improving emergency response.

ABOUT NICE SYSTEMS

NICE Systems (NASDAQ: NICE) is the worldwide leading provider of software solutions that enable organizations to take the next best action in order to improve customer experience and business results, ensure compliance, fight financial crime, and safeguard people and assets. NICE's solutions empower organizations to capture, analyze, and apply, in real time, insights from both structured and unstructured Big Data. This data comes from multiple sources, including phone calls, mobile apps, emails, chat, social media, video, and transactions. NICE solutions are used by over 25,000 organizations in more than 150 countries, including over 80 of the Fortune 100 companies. www.nice.com.

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