PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY 9-1-1: MORE THAN JUST A VOICE

In times of danger or distress, people who call 9-1-1 in an emergency will most likely hear a calmed, trained voice on the other end of the line willing to help dispatch the right resources as quickly as possible.

The elite telecommunicators working in Prince George's County Public Safety Communications office are more than the first point of contact during an emergency. They provide support, comfort and potentially lifesaving help to citizens in distress. At the same time, they initiate a process to assess the situation, determine the appropriate public-safety response and take the first steps in documenting the entire response from 9-1-1 call to resolution.

Located just east of Washington, D.C., Prince George's County covers 499 square miles and, with more than 900,000 citizens, it has the second-highest population of all Maryland's counties.

Prince George's County is a dense mix of urban and suburban communities. As part of the Maryland, Virginia and DC National Capitol Region, it's home to many government facilities and military bases, as well as the headquarters of the U.S. Census Bureau. The county is served by multiple law enforcement agencies, including local and county police departments, the County Sheriff, state police and forces patrolling parks and federal properties in the county.

"When citizens call the 9-1-1 center, the people they're talking to have been trained to the highest standards," says Charlynn Flaherty, associate director of public safety communications. "They will provide critical information to first responders, so that callers can get the help they need."

CUSTOMER PROFILE

Prince George's County, Maryland
Public Safety Communications Center

- Serves more than 900,000 people
- Receives 1.8 million calls a year
- Dispatches more than 1.4 million calls a year
- 34 positions in primary Public Safety Answering Point
- Internationally accredited through the International Association of Emergency Dispatch (IAED)
- A Motorola Solutions customer since 2006

THE PAST:
A "DONUT HOLE" IN INTERAGENCY LINKAGE

Prince George's County began its relationship with Motorola Solutions in 2005, when a radio communications needs assessment determined that the 9-1-1 and dispatch centers be expanded and security should be upgraded.

At that time, the county's radio communications were the weak point in interagency communications, leading some to call the county the "donut hole" in communications. Its communications infrastructure was based on a technology that was incompatible with those of its partners and with those of the surrounding counties. In some cases, this meant that first responders had to carry more than one radio simply to coordinate cross-border responses.

Prince George's County chose Motorola Solutions as its partner in upgrading its public safety solutions with radio equipment, infrastructure, software and a new facility that could deliver the advanced, completely interoperable system that this forward-thinking community deserved.

In 2011, the county opened a new Primary Public Safety Communications facility that is state-of-the-art and ready for next-generation 9-1-1. The Mobile Technology Center is a one-of-a-kind facility designed to provide the highest level of service to all of the public safety and public service agencies in the county, including 23 municipal police departments.

The emergency communications center spans 40,000 feet and includes 63 dispatch stations for 9-1-1 call-takers and dispatchers who use PremierOne computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system to send out resources.

The facility has been visited by leaders from around the world, and has hosted more than 1,000 tours. In 2012, the center became one of only six in the world to receive a Triple Accredited Center of Excellence (Tri-ACE) rating from the National Academy of Emergency Dispatch (NAED) in recognition of its achievement and maintenance of all of the Academy's standards of excellence for an Emergency Medical Dispatch, Emergency Police

KEY BENEFITS:

- Integrated Motorola Solutions Astro® 25 Radio system allows interoperable communications among multiple agencies
- PremierOne™ CAD/RMS/Mobile system simplifies workflows and increases situational awareness for first responders
- Public Safety Communications Center provides state-of-the-art equipment and integrated operations
- Emergency Operations Center allows staff to quickly resume operations in emergencies or for routine maintenance of primary center

Dispatch and Emergency Fire Dispatch Communications center.

2015 saw the opening of the Prince George's County Emergency Operations Center that also serves as Homeland Security headquarters and the 9-1-1 dispatch backup center. In an emergency, the center can run on generator power for 21 days.

ONE INTEGRATED CENTER FOR END TO END COMMUNICATION

Prince George's County is one of the fastest-growing counties in the nation. The communications center answers all 9-1-1 calls that come in for Prince George's County, supporting police, fire, EMS, the Sheriff's Office and 23 municipal jurisdictions. It receives approximately 1.8 million calls per year, some 1.4 million of which result in a dispatch. It also transfers calls to other jurisdictions, such as the University of Maryland, Andrews Air Force Base, the Census Bureau and the Maryland State Police.

The Public Safety Communications Office provides staffing for the 9-1-1 Center, the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system, 9-1-1 equipment, as well as ASTRO® 25 radio system which includes, GIS mapping information, calculated routing programming, fire station alerting, and fire paging system.

Its communications specialists are also responsible for maintaining 21 tower site radio communication network and backup power systems that can keep the sites operating during commercial power outages.

Serving as it does multiple agencies, the center is typically processes calls for law enforcement and the Fire/EMS Department through the same universal call taker.

"Our relationship with the police, fire, EMS, and sheriff is critical to the success of all public safety," says Flaherty. "If the agencies that we dispatch for don't trust what we're doing, then it's not going to work. They have to trust that we've provided all the available information that they need to do their job when they get on the scene."

CASE STUDY | PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY

THE PRESENT:
STREAMLINED FLOW OF INFORMATION ACROSS AGENCIES

With the updated ASTRO® 25 Radio system, Prince George's County benefits from advanced communications and automated information tracking. A common platform assures that consistent and uniform information can be easily shared with other PremierOne or third-party applications, inside and outside of Prince George's County.

The center also has responsibility for a combined records-management system for all public-safety organizations. Moving to an integrated, electronic system allowed the county to streamline and integrate reporting and recordkeeping. Because the CAD system integrates with the radio system, information from the CAD automatically and seamlessly appears within the radio system. At the same time, information from radios in the field, such as map location, is delivered to dispatchers to have a complete and accurate view of field resources.

This additional information increases the safety of personnel while ensuring that callers receive the best responses. "Integration is important to us, not only the police, fire and sheriff's office but we support 23 municipal police departments where the CAD and records management touch other agencies." says Assistant Technical Services Manager, Kayman. The new interoperability allows all this information to be transmitted to other entities that can assist first responders.

At the same time, information from the CAD and dispatch systems is automatically entered into the records-management system available to all county personnel.

The records management system digitizes the fire records system, as well as civil papers for the courts and Sheriff's Department. For example, instead of police officers typing up reports and filing them, they can access information from the CAD system and easily file electronic reports.

"There are two critical areas of public safety communications that merged together in our center: the operations function and the technology process. You can't have one without the other, so we make sure that they merge seamlessly," Flaherty says.

"We had a proposal for the new building, but everybody was wondering how we were going to make it work. When the Motorola Solutions' construction manager began to speak, you could see everyone in the room relax."

Charlynn Flaherty
Associate Director of Public Safety Communications
Prince George's County, Maryland

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS ALWAYS AT-THE-READY

The Prince George's County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is not simply a backup center. It was built to the highest Federal and state standards. It is available 24/7/365, so in an emergency, staff can immediately transfer and begin working there without interrupting the high level of service.

Previously, the county did not have a "hot" emergency operations center. Instead, personnel had to spend several hours setting up equipment in the backup facility before agency staff could begin to coordinate emergency responses. In the new Emergency Operations Center, staff can walk in, power up equipment and get the job done.

The Emergency Operations Center mirrors the primary communications center not only in equipment, but also in the design of the physical plant. The county determined that this was important because it enables dispatchers, call takers and other staff to immediately resume work after they relocate there, using the same equipment, processes and procedures.

"It's an alternate location, not a backup facility," Flaherty says. "It was really important that it function at the same level as the primary — and it does."

This facility is also the headquarters for the Prince George's County Office of Homeland Security. Homeland Security communications are integrated with the 9-1-1 system and the CAD. Management of the county's compliance with the National Incident Management System is handled here as well.

Staff can make use of a variety of audio/visual and information-technology applications to collect data and produce reports to be shared.

"The new building is our best tool," says Tyrone Wells, a program manager for the Prince George's County Office of Emergency Management. In addition to emergency operations, the department maintains offices in the center; there are also facilities for training and community education.

The integration of Homeland Security operations with the 9-1-1 center in an emergency is crucial, according to Wells. It allows the 9-1-1 and CAD system to log vital data that can help the department understand how public safety is being impacted and where resources are needed.
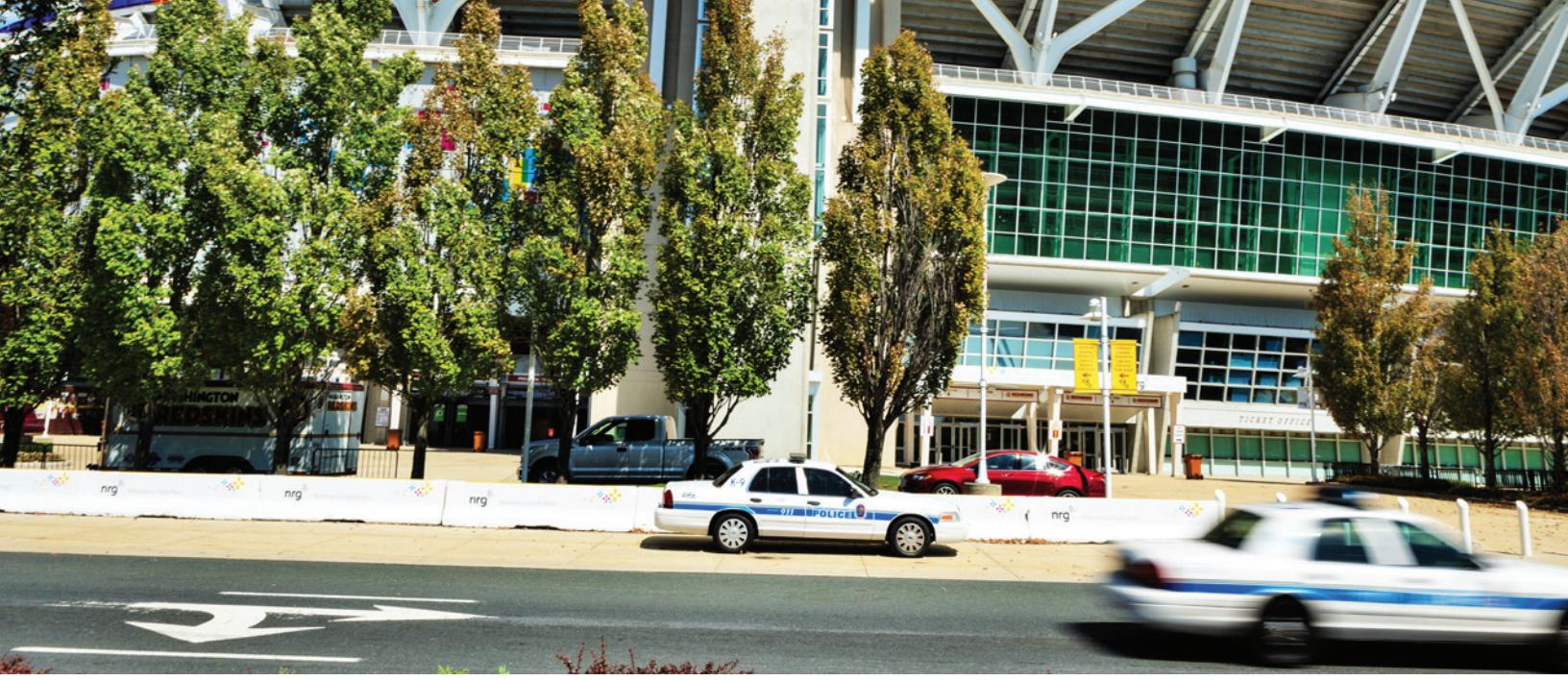
"Integration is important to us... we support 23 municipal police departments where CAD and records management systems touch other agencies... Every day you walk in here and your reminded that it's a major operation and we are doing something pretty serious here."

Kayman Khaloughi
Assistant Technical Services Manager
Office of Emergency Management

THE FUTURE:
INVESTING IN THE COMMUNITY

Prince George's County is a leader in providing the highest quality of public safety response to its growing population. The investments it's made in public safety and communications have already increased the well-being of the community.

Following the successful opening of the Emergency Operations Center, the county is now preparing to upgrade its 9-1-1 calling technology. The solution includes powerful, next-generation 9-1-1 applications for call handling, text-to-9-1-1 and mapping, along with advanced data management and analytics. All functions will integrate with the existing PremierOne CAD and radio system.

In a separate endeavor, Prince George's County will install Motorola Solutions PremierOne CSR, a customer-service request system. It allows for customer-

service requests to be made via email, the web, smartphone apps and social media. From the first contact to the last work order, the system will allow the county to capture each detail of every interaction as it helps staff to identify the right response, dispatch appropriate personnel and inform constituents when the job is done.

Perhaps the greatest benefit of this integrated and interoperable public safety communications system is intangible. It's the pride that every member of the Prince George's County Department of Public Safety Communications feels in knowing that they are providing the public with the highest quality of service.

> "If I have a bad day and paperwork's not going right or something administrative isn't working, I walk through the 9-1-1 center and the dispatch area to remind myself why I'm there. I'm there for them; they're not there for me; and they're there for the public safety agencies. And that's why I love my job, because we're doing what we need to do for the community."

Charlynn Flaherty
Associate Director of Public Safety Communications
Prince George's County, Maryland

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