

# Ouachita Parish's Tech-Forward Approach to Public Safety

## How Technology is Transforming Operations from The Patrol Car to The Command Center

In North Louisiana, the Ouachita Parish Sheriff's Office (OPSO) manages a diverse landscape ranging from bustling city centers to dense rural forests. For Sheriff Marc Mashaw, "good enough" was never the standard. Recognizing that modern law enforcement is guided by data as much as by "boots on the ground," OPSO bypassed a gradual rollout and went "all in" on a unified technological ecosystem.

By partnering with Motorola Solutions, OPSO established a **Real-Time Crime Center (RTCC)**. Powered by **CommandCentral Aware**, this digital infrastructure serves as the agency's central nervous system, ensuring every radio, camera, and drone "talks" to one another to provide a level of overwatch previously thought impossible.

### Customer

Ouachita Parish Sheriff's Office (OPSO)

### Industry

Law Enforcement

### Communications:

- APX N70 Smart Radios

### Video

- V700 Body Cameras
- M500 In-Car Video System
- M500 Interview Recording System (Pelco IP Cameras)
- L5F Fixed License Plate Recognition (LPR)
- Avigilon Alta Video
- BRINC Responder Drone
- BRINC Lemur Drone

### Software

- CommandCentral Aware

# Challenges, Solutions & Results

## 1. Eliminating Communication Dead Zones with APX N70 Smart Radios

### Challenge

Reliable communication was a constant struggle, particularly in rural areas and within large infrastructure such as the metal-reinforced schools that blocked radio signals. In many cases, a deputy had to stand outside just to relay messages for teams inside. This lack of signal meant officers couldn't coordinate or call for help during an active crisis.

### Solution and Result

Through advanced radio technology, OPSO eliminated dangerous dead zones within schools and rural areas. APX N70 radios automatically connect to school Wi-Fi networks, allowing deputies to maintain clear communication deep inside metal-reinforced buildings. This helps ensure that during a crisis, teams can be coordinated without delay. Additionally, SmartLocate and SmartMapping allow supervisors to see the exact location of every deputy on their handheld screens, even when they are away from their patrol vehicles.

## 2. Creating Real-Time Situational Awareness with CommandCentral Aware and a Real-Time Crime Center (RTCC)

### Challenge

Deputies often entered scenes with no visibility into what lay behind a door or around a corner. Command posts relied solely on radio traffic, leaving supervisors "blind" to real-time conditions. If a deputy was incapacitated and unable to reach their radio, the team had no immediate way to know their status or exact location.

### Solution and Result

The integration of CommandCentral Aware has provided deputies with a digital backup that was previously non-existent. By streaming live video directly to the RTCC, supervisors can now see exactly what a deputy is facing inside a building or during a struggle.



**"If you haven't accepted the fact that technology is here to stay in law enforcement, you're way behind. It's a force multiplier that helps us do things faster and more efficiently."**

**— Sheriff Marc Mashaw**





In a critical incident where a deputy broke his leg during a confrontation, RTCC operators saw the injury live via the deputy's body camera and dispatched medical aid and backup before the deputy could even reach his radio. **Sergeant Shannon Harkins, Head of the RTCC**, noted that they "were able to notify the dispatcher that they needed to send medical assistance" when the deputy's "leg went in a direction it wasn't supposed to go."

### 3. Streamlining Investigations and Reporting with V700 Body Cameras and M500 Interview Recording System

#### Challenge

Officers relied heavily on manual, paper-based processes that were prone to human error and significant delays. They often faced information overload during high-adrenaline incidents, making it nearly impossible to capture every witness statement or detail accurately in a handwritten report later that night. This created information gaps where critical evidence could be lost or obscured.

#### Solution and Result

With V700 body cameras, investigators can now leverage the cameras' footage to capture the granular details of a scene, instead of relying solely on handwritten notes. **Major Jay Ellerman, Head of the Investigative Division**, views the V700 body camera as a huge game changer for this very reason. "Every major crime that we investigate, I always go back and watch the [body camera] footage," Ellerman explains. "The deputies are full of adrenaline and getting information from everywhere. They take the notes they can, but there's no way they can get every detail correct on a piece of paper." This capability is vital for preserving the integrity of a crime scene, particularly when physical evidence is shifted by emergency personnel. Ellerman recalls a recent homicide where the body had been moved by paramedics before investigators arrived, "I could go back and watch that initial responding deputy's body cam and see exactly where that person was and what had happened," he noted.

Additionally, the M500 Interview Recording System also allows supervisors to bridge the gap between the field and the station. Leadership can now remotely monitor live interview feeds while simultaneously managing a crime scene, ensuring that critical leads are shared instantly rather than days later. "While officers are at the crime scene trying to make sense of the evidence, they often have no idea what's taking place in the interview room," says Ellerman. "Now, I can access that footage with an app. If I'm on the scene, I can watch the interview myself in real-time."



## 4. Compressing Suspect Search Times With L5F Fixed License Plate Recognition (LPR)

### Challenge

Identifying and tracking suspects depended heavily on manual legwork. Pursuits were often hindered by the need to stop and call in descriptions, granting suspects a head start.

### Solution and Result

The timeline for tracking suspects has been compressed from days into minutes. Through the integration of the L5F Fixed License Plate Recognition (LPR) and Convoy Analysis, officers can now monitor suspect vehicles across the parish in real time. In one instance, a serial ATM burglary crew was intercepted on their way back to Texas because the system identified their pattern and location faster than manual tracking ever could.

## 5. Accelerating Missing Persons Recovery and Providing Aid Faster with BRINC Responder Drones

### Challenge

Finding missing persons, particularly in secluded or heavily wooded areas, required exhaustive grid searches with no way to track search team positions in the dark. Furthermore, the agency continuously sought ways to deliver immediate assistance to people in danger or distress more quickly than deputies could arrive.

### Solution and Result

**Major Anthony Washington, Head of the Uniform Patrol Division**, highlights the transformative impact of the agency's new BRINC drone technology. Rather than waiting for boots on the ground, Washington explains that they can program the drone to "launch itself and get eyes on the scene before the deputies ever get there."

These drones can also work in tandem with GPS mapping to sweep vast territories for missing persons. Utilizing thermal imaging, the technology can visually identify temperature differences, even in low or no light. This capability has the potential to locate missing persons in dense wooded areas in a matter of minutes, significantly reducing the time required compared to traditional foot searches. Washington also emphasizes the technology's potential for immediate life-saving deliveries, such as emergency payloads like AEDs, Narcan, or EpiPens. As Washington shared, the drone can deliver essential aid: "If we get someone in an overturned boat in the lake or bayou, [the drone] is capable of carrying a life jacket to them."



## 6. Strengthening Public Trust and Safety With V700 Body Cameras and M500 In-Car Video Systems

### Challenge

The absence of objective video evidence turned citizen complaints into “he-said, she-said” disputes that were difficult to resolve. Additionally, transporting detainees alone posed a major safety risk, as deputies could not monitor the backseat for medical emergencies or the ingestion of hidden narcotics while driving.

### Solution and Result

Objective video evidence has revolutionized the office’s ability to maintain accountability and protect deputies from claims. The vast majority of citizen complaints are now cleared as unfounded within minutes of reviewing body camera and in-car video footage, preserving public trust and agency resources. This commitment to transparency is a sentiment shared by **Chief Deputy Larry Knight**, who emphasizes how this technology supports the integrity of their service: “Motorola Solutions dash and body cameras have strengthened accountability across our agency, giving deputies the confidence to do their jobs knowing the truth is always documented. With the ability to review footage for accurate reporting, frivolous complaints have become virtually nonexistent, allowing our focus to remain where it belongs: serving the public with integrity.”

Safety during transport has also improved dramatically. RTCC operators have used M500 in-car video cameras to witness detainees attempting to swallow narcotics or hide weapons, allowing for immediate medical or tactical intervention. This proactive monitoring ensures that the agency can minimize liability by providing a safe environment for its personnel and those in its custody.





“Currency for people is dollars and cents. But with this technology, currency in public safety is minutes and seconds. That’s what matters the most, especially when someone’s life depends on it.”

- Sergeant Shannon Harkins, head of the Real Time Crime Center.

## Conclusion

The Ouachita Parish Sheriff’s Office has proven that when technology is used as a partner, it doesn’t replace the human element - it protects it. By moving away from information gaps and dead zones, OPSO has turned every radio and camera into a lifeline. Whether it’s a drone reaching a scene before a deputy or a supervisor seeing an injury happen in real-time, this system gives the agency the one thing they need most: time.

In the words of Sergeant Shannon Harkins, public safety currency isn’t dollars and cents; it’s the minutes and seconds that save lives. This unified strategy ensures that the men and women of OPSO have the backup they need to return home safely while creating a faster, more transparent shield for the entire community. By connecting every corner of the parish through one digital heartbeat, OPSO isn’t just responding to calls, they are building a safer future for everyone they serve.

To learn more, visit: [www.motorolasolutions.com](http://www.motorolasolutions.com)



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