

Motorola Managed Services for Public Safety Networks

With Motorola's Support, the City of Arlington's Communications Network Is a One Man Show

When the City of Arlington, TX decided to outsource support of their complex communications network, they chose a partner they could trust.



About Arlington, Texas

Arlington, Texas is the 50th largest city in the US with a population of approximately 375,000 people. Located midway between Dallas and Forth Worth, Arlington is the proud home of professional football and baseball teams, as well as a world class theme park.

Situation

Consider the daunting proposition of single-handedly managing a city-wide wireless network that provides all the city's radio communications needs and 9-1-1 dispatch services. In the spirit of the City of Arlington's "We Can" attitude, Gerard Eads, Communication Services Administrator, now does just that—with help from Motorola.

The City of Arlington, Texas has long been at the forefront of new technology adoption and has taken every opportunity to beta-test new systems. As a long time Motorola customer, the city was confident that they would receive the same competent and comprehensive support for the new systems as they had always received in the past. In fact, when the local service center needed help getting the city's two-site SmartNet simulcast system with Net Motion and AirMobile data components online, Motorola quickly dispatched two engineers to get the system running.

The city made the decision to refocus some of its internal resources and outsource support for its radios and communication infrastructure. "As the trend toward higher end communication technologies continues, self-maintaining these complex networks becomes increasingly difficult,"

says Eads. "Unless you have a sizable and well-trained radio or IT department, you need to bring in experts to help manage and maintain that system."

Challenge

As a member of the Public Safety Radio Communications Planning Committee of the Homeland Security Initiative for the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG), and a true advocate for the needs of public safety, Eads understood the importance of keeping the city's communications system on the cutting edge. Without a highly trained and dedicated internal support team, Eads needed a reliable and responsive partner to care for the city's increasingly complex network. Building upon the city's long standing, trusted relationship with Motorola, he turned to Derek Johnson, Motorola Customer Support Manager, to help him create a customized and comprehensive system management support plan.

Along with a high level of coordination with the local Motorola Service Station (MSS), DFW Communications, Johnson developed a support strategy that would put the right elements in place to facilitate a seamless migration away from self-maintenance. In addition, the support plan would hand over end-to-end care of the network to Motorola and ensure that not only the city's existing network would be supported, but laid the foundation for new technologies in the future.

Tailored Response and Approach

In an outstanding commitment to achieving optimal performance and reliability from the

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network, Johnson and Motorola Account Executive, Rob Bondurant are in daily contact with Eads. Whatever the concerns of the customer, Motorola is available and ready to address them. With this level of communication, Johnson and Bondurant are able to anticipate the needs of the system and propose appropriate and effective solutions, in most cases before the need arises.

As part of this tailored service agreement, the local MSS provides a technician who makes daily on-site visits to ensure the system continues to operate at full capacity and resolution cycle time is kept to a minimum. In addition, to facilitate remote monitoring, the system is internally networked and if an issue arises, the MSS shop manager and Motorola CSM are notified simultaneously.

At the recommendation of Larry Escalona, Motorola Service Operations Director, the City of Arlington hosts monthly user group meetings where all end users of the system are invited to participate in Motorola's system performance updates and network related news. At the meeting's conclusion, an open forum is held to give users an opportunity to express their concerns, suggestions, and experiences directly to Eads, Johnson, and the Motorola support team. "Department representatives from the Police, Fire/EMS, Utility Departments and outside agencies using the system recognized the value of monthly system updates," Eads says.

Excellent Results

"My original plan was to expand the internal service shop to add technicians, space, tools and training," Eads recalls. "However, after completing a business plan and doing a cost analysis of internal vs. external support, a decision was made to close the shop and outsource all service to Motorola."

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Critical to the success of this service agreement is the commitment, level of interaction, and responsiveness between the City of Arlington, end-users of the network, and Motorola, enabling consistent 99.999 network availability.

Cycle time for repairs is consistently below the three-day contractual agreement, with average turn-around in less than two days. Utilizing feedback from the monthly user group meetings, Motorola can immediately begin to develop solutions to address those issues beyond what is represented in reports and network monitoring.

With the success of this partnership and its enthusiasm for new technologies, the City of Arlington recently migrated to an Internet Protocol (IP)-based system. It is also one of the first cities in the region to implement Motorola's MeshNetworks Enabled Architecture (MEA). MEA, originally developed for enhanced battlefield communications that allow users to form instant tactical data networks that self-form and self-heal between users and network infrastructure, is yet another example of the City of Arlington's "We Can" commitment to deliver the finest of services to its residents.



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