

Georgetown County improves interoperability.

With Sprint® Converged Network Solutions, Georgetown County provides efficient and proactive public service during emergency situations.



The coastal county of **Georgetown, South Carolina** includes one city, several towns and one large school district, employing approximately 2,700 people county-wide. Georgetown has been a port city since 1732. In fact, the international port is the oldest continuously open seaport on the Eastern Seaboard and handles more than 1.8 million tons of bulk cargo from Latin America, Europe and Asia every year. Georgetown County is composed of many industries including, healthcare, education, utilities and finance.

Georgetown County is well known for its outdoor recreational activities, industrial parks, tourism and beaches. It is committed to providing quality public healthcare, promoting community service and developing a long-range plan for the county's growth and future prosperity.

Georgetown County's mission is to provide quality services to the general public in a courteous and efficient manner contributing to the health, safety and welfare of all.

For more information, visit georgetowncountysc.org/.

Challenge

Founded in 1792, Georgetown County, South Carolina has a population of roughly 60,000. The County employs approximately 2,700 people, including 700 Government workers, 2,300 City employees in Georgetown, its largest town, and 1,700 in one school district. The County has a total area of 1,035 square miles, with over 20 percent of it being water. Because of its size and diverse needs, the County knew it required a comprehensive communication plan that would be flexible enough to work regardless of location.

To communicate with its various agencies and employees, the County, City of Georgetown and the County's school districts had relied on older style radios. These radios were expensive to maintain and unreliable, with limited connectivity within municipal and school buildings. Many of the facilities and schools within the County were virtual dead zones, making it difficult for employees to communicate from department to department and from agency to agency. In addition to its interoperability issues, Georgetown County is largely rural, which meant efficient cellular communication throughout the County also could be a challenge.

Because of these issues, when County employees were away from their desks, they were sometimes completely unreachable. For the safety of its citizens and stability of its infrastructure, County and City officials, as well as school district administrators, recognized there was a desperate need for a more unified platform of connectivity.

"Nextel Direct Connect® from Sprint provides us the ability to be on the scene of anything that happens because we can communicate with anyone, almost anytime or any place. Whether I am talking across the state or the country, it's as if I am standing right in my own office. This provides a better service to the community, and the people in our community are the reason I am here."

— Sheriff Lane Cribb, Georgetown County Sheriff's Office



Solution

After evaluating each independent agency, Sprint was able to provide an integrated Converged Network Solution (CNS) that would improve overall coverage and interoperability throughout, including Public Safety, Public Works and school districts. To increase capacity and extend coverage, Sprint installed a Console Integration solution to help assist dispatchers, using their existing 800 MHz systems. Sprint Mobile Extension was also offered as a solution to aid responders who split time between their desk and the field. By integrating their Sprint devices into the primary telephone system, all inbound calls were consolidated into one phone number and voicemail, allowing them to be reached immediately, virtually wherever.

Nextel Direct Connect[®] was also offered as a solution to allow interoperability between every department and agency, as well as neighboring municipalities. With Nextel Direct Connect, first responders were able to establish a common communication method throughout the County and State, regardless of their location. Because local school districts have worked with the County to have the same level of interoperability, principals and administrators now also have push-to-talk access to their own school resource officers and local Public Safety agencies, as well as having access to City and County government officials. Many schools within the district also received bi-directional amplifiers (BDA) to improve their coverage.

In addition, Land Mobile Radio (LMR) replacement was used to provide several non-first responder divisions, such as Electrical Departments and Public Works, with an alternative solution to antiquated two-way radios. LMR replacement gave these agencies effective communications regardless of radio type of frequency and allowed critical resources to instantly connect during incident management.

Bottom line

Sprint was able to provide a beginning-to-end solution for Georgetown County, offering consistent and accurate communication during day-to-day and critical situations. Throughout the area, Sprint has equipped the County's public service departments and school districts with devices and applications used to improve performance and productivity across multiple professions. Because nearly everyone working within the County is connected using the same platform, they are able to address emergency events of all sizes as a united front.

For Georgetown County, Sprint CNS gives first responders and school administrators, as well as school bus drivers on more than 120 buses, streamlined communication and increased interoperability. Fire Rescue, Mobile Command Centers and field staff utilize EV-DO Air Cards[®] and BlackBerry[®] smartphones to respond more efficiently. Beyond saving money and reducing costs, Georgetown is now able to provide efficient and proactive public service when it counts the most. During emergency situations, such as hurricanes and other natural disasters, the County can now use more reliable communications to help better serve the community and keep its residents safe.

“Since we have begun utilizing Nextel phones, Public Service Department employees have increased productivity by having uninterrupted cell phone and Direct Connect communications within the rural areas of our vast county. Sprint has provided a reliable, uniform service that is consistent on a daily basis which is crucial to keep operations efficient.”

*— Ray C. Funnye, Director,
Georgetown County Department of Public Services*

For more information on Sprint wireless solutions, visit sprint.com/business or contact your Sprint representative