

Morris County Improves Emergency Communications with Nextel Dispatch Integration

Challenge

At the Morris County Communications Center approximately 30 dispatchers and administrative staff handle all 911 calls for the county and 12 municipalities. This includes emergency calls and dispatch for the Sheriff's Office, Prosecutor's Office, Morris County Park Police, Police in supported municipalities, and fire and emergency medical services. The existing radio system couldn't meet the requirements for portability and reliability based on the growing demands that the system dictated—coverage was uneven and the handsets were bulky and heavy.

The Communications Center decided to undertake a major renovation, replacing the conventional low-band radio system with a more robust and portable solution that could address the critical requirements for redundancy, interoperability and extended coverage. Since many of the law enforcement, fire, and rescue personnel were already independently turning to Nextel handsets to meet their needs, it was essential that the new system incorporate Nextel into the infrastructure.

Solution

The Communications Center decided to upgrade to a new trunked radio system with a Motorola Centracom Gold Elite Dispatch Console while employing the Nextel National Network, a mobile communications solution that would combine the benefits of both a cellular network and a trunked radio system. As a result, network coverage within the county became pervasive and, thanks to the Nextel handsets, could extend beyond county lines. This was especially important when detectives had to leave the area to conduct investigations in neighboring jurisdictions such as New York City, Trenton and other counties.

Morris County then implemented Nextel Dispatch Integration to integrate the Nextel handsets, already in use by emergency services personnel, directly into the Motorola Dispatch Console and the trunked radio system. In addition, officers who used Nextel BlackBerry devices can also be integrated into the system. Through the console system, dispatchers can receive, transmit, and record dispatched calls from either or both systems for redundancy. Specialty units such as crime scene, canine, forensic, and sex crime units could be more quickly and efficiently contacted via the Nextel Direct Connect services. Operations have been significantly streamlined and interoperability is seamless.



Morris County, New Jersey is among the fastest growing counties in the New Jersey, New York and Connecticut metropolitan region. The county stretches 30 miles from east to west and 30 miles from north to south.

Today, Morris County is the state's seventh largest county with a population of over 500,000. There are 39 municipalities in the 470 square mile county.

The staff of 30 in the Communications Center is responsible for ensuring emergency communications for the county and 12 municipalities, including the Sheriff's Office, Prosecutor's Office, Morris County Park Police, Police in supported municipalities, and fire and emergency medical services.

Bottom Line

In the three years since implementing Nextel Dispatch Integration, the Morris County Communications Center has realized significant operational benefits. Supplementing coverage of the trunked radio system, communications is now assured beyond jurisdictional boundaries via Nextel. And because the Nextel services are digital, they bypass scanners in order to maintain privacy and safety. In addition, dispatchers now have multiple ways to dispatch and reach emergency personnel, ensuring redundancy and efficiency. Administration also uses Nextel handsets to streamline their communications.

As the Morris County Communications Center now looks to support the State's major Shared Services initiative, whereby the Center would support additional municipalities in the county, the Nextel system will continue to expand into additional agencies. The Center is also evaluating the addition of GPS data transmission for tracking emergency response teams and providing an increased measure of safety for personnel in the field.

“Through Nextel Dispatch Integration, we’ve seen tremendous operational advantages. Our dispatchers have multiple ways to contact emergency personnel for redundancy, speed and convenience at their fingertips. With Nextel, the response is instant—there’s no waiting—and now we can instantly and securely communicate outside the boundaries of our jurisdiction when we need to.”

*– Douglas P. Scherzer,
Director of Communications,
Morris County, NJ*