

County Emergency Management Mobilizes Network



Unified communications, VPN connectivity expand capability to support disaster preparedness and first-responder efforts.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Customer Name: Benton County Emergency Management Agency (EMA)

Industry: Public Safety

Location: Bentonville, AR

Company Size: 500

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

- Mobilized workforce
- County network connection needed on-the-go
- Upgrading 5 year-old unit

NETWORK SOLUTION

- Upgrade to UC v9.0
- VPN Connectivity to main data center
- Cisco IP phones, Wireless access

BUSINESS IMPACT

- One of the only mobile units in Midwest with redundant wireless
- Unit can sustain itself for minimum of 72 hours
- 4G LTE, satellite and hardwire network connectivity

Business Challenge

With a jurisdiction of more than 225,000 citizens in northwest Arkansas, the Benton County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) oversees all local public safety efforts for large-scale disasters, including preparation, mitigation, response, and recovery processes. The EMA also coordinates communication and resource allocation with other public, state, and federal agencies.

In 2007, the EMA purchased a National Incident Management System (NIMS) Type II Mobile Command Unit (MCU) to increase network communications for on-site use. As the unit aged, expanded capabilities were needed to ensure that accurate, real-time data could be provided to first responders through the mobilized network. In addition to regulatory requirements for safety and reporting, the EMA sought to provide redundant connectivity to the main network for standalone functionality. Within five years of the MCU's purchase, an upgrade of the entire IT backbone was desired.

Solution and Results

The EMA relied on Cisco® equipment for the installation and implementation of a new network system, outfitting a Command Area, Galley Area, and Communications Area. With conference seating for seven, utilizing IP video telephony, the Command Area enables decision makers to collect information in critical situations. The Galley Area houses a full network rack, acting as the "nerve center" of the MCU. VPN Connectivity provides main network access with redundant backup, to allow the 34-foot mobile unit to run standalone for a minimum of 72 hours, in the event of a severed or disrupted connection. Four workstations with deployable networked computers make up the Communications Area, offering full interoperable radio dispatch in support of an incident.

In addition to upgrades within the MCU, the EMA wanted to expand network capability outside the unit. A Cisco wireless solution provides connectivity to external users and increases situational awareness for first responders. Benton County's MCU is one of the only units with redundant wireless access in the midwestern United States.

“Being able to provide the tools that responders need in the field to make informed decisions was ultimately our first goal. It is easy to justify an investment when you look at what it does to help save lives.”

— Mike Dixon, Deputy Director, Benton County Emergency Management Agency

For More Information

For more information on the Benton County EMA, visit <http://www.readybc.com>.



Americas Headquarters
Cisco Systems, Inc.
San Jose, CA

Asia Pacific Headquarters
Cisco Systems (USA) Pte. Ltd.
Singapore

Europe Headquarters
Cisco Systems International BV Amsterdam,
The Netherlands

Cisco has more than 200 offices worldwide. Addresses, phone numbers, and fax numbers are listed on the Cisco Website at www.cisco.com/go/offices.

Cisco and the Cisco logo are trademarks or registered trademarks of Cisco and/or its affiliates in the U.S. and other countries. To view a list of Cisco trademarks, go to this URL: www.cisco.com/go/trademarks. Third party trademarks mentioned are the property of their respective owners. The use of the word partner does not imply a partnership relationship between Cisco and any other company. (1110R)