



KERSHAW COUNTY MAKES THE RIGHT CALL FOR CITIZENS WITH NEXT GENERATION TECHNOLOGY

NOW THE PUBLIC CAN TEXT-TO-9-1-1 WHEN VOICE CALLING IS NOT POSSIBLE



CUSTOMER PROFILE
Kershaw County, South Carolina

Industry Public Safety Solution

- Intrado Viper
- Intrado® Advanced 9-1-1

Text-to-9-1-1 Guidelines

- Only text when voice calling is not an option
- If deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired
- In a medical emergency that limits speech
- If talking on the phone increases the danger
- In areas where a voice call can't get through

OVERVIEW

In the historic heart of South Carolina, Kershaw County is making history again. Its E9-1-1 call center is leading the charge to enhance public safety and empower its community with next generation technology. With less than 4 percent of dispatch centers in the U.S. able to receive text-to-9-1-1, Kershaw County is in the forefront of adopting this vital communication solution¹.

Kershaw County is the first agency in the state to implement a fully integrated text-to-9-1-1 solution to streamline communications between emergency services and the public. This includes the hearing-impaired and speech-impaired, and citizens in situations where voice calling is not an option.

The county's implementation could not be timelier as more people rely on mobile devices to reach emergency services. Over half of the 240 million calls to 9-1-1 each year are made with cell phones². With 2.12 trillion text messages being sent every year³, it stands to reason that the demand to text-to-9-1-1 will only increase.

SITUATION

TRANSFORM AN AGING SYSTEM WITH NEXT GENERATION TECHNOLOGY

Kershaw County receives more than 100,000 calls to its E9-1-1 call center each year. Dispatchers coordinate the sheriff's office, EMS, three police departments and 17 fire departments to respond to over 62,000 residents across 740 square miles.

According to Kirk Stropes, Deputy Director of E9-1-1 Communications, the county's analog trunking system was nearing its end of life and the legacy phone equipment was not far behind. Stropes was keenly aware of the importance of text-to-9-1-1 to give callers another way to contact emergency services.

"We strive to be a leader when it comes to technology and I have a very supportive administration that backs the concept," he says. "We saw Motorola taking the lead and entering into a partnership with Intrado, and that perked my interest. They offered the whole package."

The county's other alternative was Internet-based with just one wireless carrier. "It was standalone and I was really looking for an integrated solution. When you're talking about Motorola and Intrado, you can't get any better than that," says Stropes.

CASE STUDY

KERSHAW COUNTY TEXT-TO-9-1-1

SOLUTION

SEAMLESS AND EFFICIENT TRANSITION TO TEXT-TO-911

"The Motorola team demoed the solution for us and for the county council. Once they saw it, the council was on board 100 percent," recalls Director Stropes. After testing was done with wireless carriers, a fully integrated text-to-9-1-1 solution was deployed in November 2014.

"This was one of the easiest implementation projects I have ever been involved in, and I have been in public safety for over thirty years. The team had a timeline and met or exceeded it. Everything went very smoothly," says Stropes.

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E9-1-1 Communications

The solution was implemented in two phases. First, the analog trunking system was replaced with an IP network and then, new customer premise equipment was installed. "Everything was integrated into our legacy equipment for a short time and rolled over," says Stropes. "We didn't miss a call. It was a very seamless switchover."

RESULT

IMPROVED RESPONSE WITH OPTIONS FOR EVERY CITIZEN

Today, Kershaw County has an integrated network that provides multiple ways to reach 9-1-1 and improved voice quality as well. Although dispatchers were initially concerned about a flood of texts, the fear was unfounded. "We talked with agencies from large metropolitan areas that implemented text-to-9-1-1 and they had few, if any, overloads or abuses," says Director Stropes.

"Now the hearing-impaired and voice-impaired who used to rely on cumbersome TTY devices can use their cellphones to text 9-1-1," he adds. "We had a message from a disabled citizen who needed assistance and one from a woman who heard shots and didn't want the gunman to hear her. She texted us from her bedroom."

Stropes says the system will pave the way for photos, video and crash notifications from the public. "It's in the best interests of our citizens to implement new technology that's going to make our jobs easier and serve them better," he emphasizes. "Agencies may be hesitant, but this has been tested and is long overdue. NG9-1-1 will enhance the safety of citizens and save lives."

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Sources:

^{1,2} NENA, 9-1-1 Statistics, February 2015

³ CTIA-The Wireless Association,
http://www.ctia.org/media/industry_info/index.cfm/AID/10323

To make the right call for citizens with Next Generation 9-1-1 solutions, visit www.motorolasolutions.com/nextgen or contact your local Motorola representative.

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