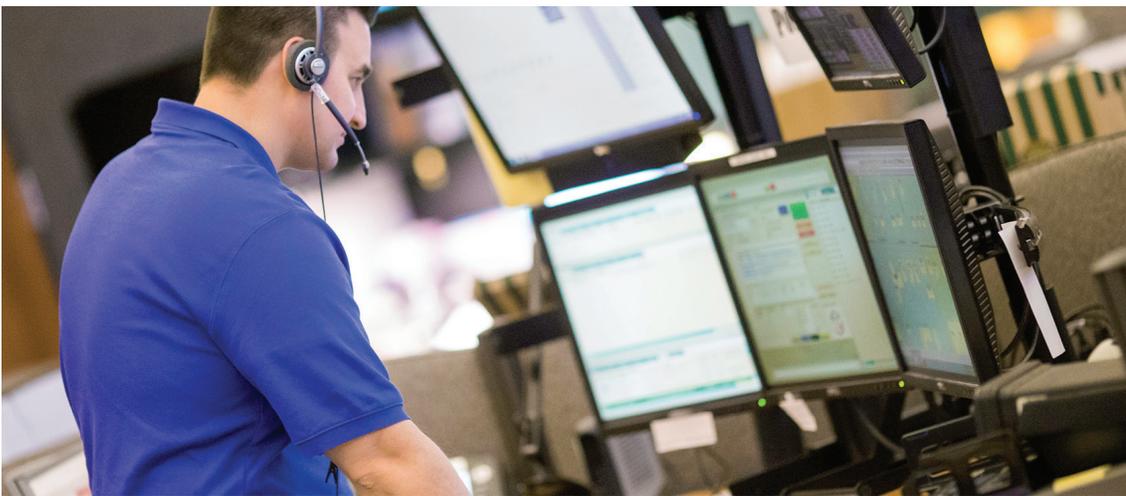


# WAUKESHA COUNTY UPGRADES ITS FOCUS ON COMMUNITY SAFETY WITH NEXT GENERATION 9-1-1

**EMERGENCY CALLWORKS CALLSTATION MAPPING HELPS DISPATCHERS EASILY LOCATE 9-1-1 CALLERS IN NEED**



## **CUSTOMER PROFILE**

Waukesha County,  
Wisconsin

## **Motorola Solutions**

Emergency CallWorks  
CallStation

Next Generation 9-1-1

P25 / ASTRO® 25 System  
(Implementation in Process)

## **PLANNING AND COUNTY-WIDE COLLABORATION HELPS WAUKESHA LEAD THE WAY FOR INTEROPERABILITY AND TEXT-TO-9-1-1 FUTURE IN WISCONSIN**

Waukesha County, Wisconsin is home to more than 300,000 people in 37 communities and sits just east of Milwaukee, and Milwaukee County. The county includes 37 communities and is home to 390,000 people. The county supports businesses that range from dairy farms to heavy industry. Waukesha is also the place where guitar innovator Les Paul called home, so those in the know call it Guitar Town. The region's reputation for beautiful parks and scenery attracts visitors throughout the year.

Each year, approximately 388,000 calls make their way through the Waukesha County Communications Center, with approximately 50 dispatchers handling 95,000 emergency calls. The center is one of seven public safety answering points for the entire county.

Stellar emergency services have helped Waukesha County earn a reputation for being a safe place to live, work, or visit, with community members taking an active role in deciding how tax funding should be spent for safety

services. Citizens from the county also invest time in attending courses about public safety offered by the local police and Sheriff's departments.

The Waukesha County Public Safety Agencies are challenged with keeping citizens safe within the county, but with an Interstate system in the county, and a major metropolitan area just next door, the department also maintains that there really are no borders for public safety – so maintaining a safe region means excellent communication with its neighbors.

## THE CHALLENGE

Gary Bell is the Director of Emergency Preparedness for Waukesha County Communications. His role revolves around running the 9-1-1 center and making sure citizens' tax dollars are applied to public safety in the best way possible. With 79 percent more states and territories adopting a plan for Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1) since 2014<sup>1</sup>, Waukesha County officials realized it was time to upgrade their analog 9-1-1 communications equipment to a proven call-taking solution built for the future. Bell notes that the county identified over a decade ago that the move-over to digital would mean they'd need to reserve funds for replacing radio systems. "The county did a really good job of saving a little bit of money each year to transition from analog to digital," says Bell. In the past few years, as infrastructure started to reach the end-of-life stage, the county started thinking more seriously about transitioning to the digital radio system environment.

In addition to transitioning the county, Bell and his team knew that it would be critical to make sure that the system they chose could integrate seamlessly with Milwaukee County and other regional agencies. "Our call center is a backup point for many communities, Milwaukee County being one," says Bell. "In fact, in 2013, we hosted Milwaukee County's call center for about 21 days after a fire impacted their center."

"We're talking about two different governing structures," said Bell, "We needed to make sure that we had a good communications plan in place between the two counties so we could stay in alignment."

With interoperability at the forefront, the team was also concerned about details such as encryption, safety and compliance issues they faced on a daily basis, including



**"The acquisition of Emergency CallWorks was really an important thing for us. We had just secured P25, the network for the radio system for the county, so we were very comfortable with Motorola. We had a long term and vibrant relationship with them. It just reinforced that Emergency Callworks is a really high performing company that understood the reason why we were involved in emergency services."**

Gary Bell, Director of Emergency Preparedness

keeping citizens' private information safe as well as keeping officers in the field secure.

More than anything, they wanted to implement an effective solution that would empower their employees to do more with advanced tools so that they could maintain their focus on the greater Waukesha community. The need to know callers' locations and be able to get to them quickly – whether they're on the highway or disoriented on a nature trail – was at the heart of the decisions they made when searching for the right solution.

## THE SOLUTION

The Waukesha County team evaluated multiple vendors to make their decision and ensure that the system they selected could support their needs, work with the existing equipment they were using, and also support surrounding communities.

Bell recognized that there were a lot of communities in the area with aging analog systems, so the county opted for a Next Generation 9-1-1 system with the ability to back-invert to analog for better interoperability. "When we looked at public safety coordination, we really focused part and parcel on the idea that there are no boundaries," says Bell. "The IP environment allows for that to occur relatively effectively so we can share infrastructure and assets, and provide better outcomes for the responders."

As Milwaukee and Waukesha adopt the new system, they're creating the Regional Milwaukee County/Waukesha County P25 / ASTRO® 25 System, which is called OASIS. The OASIS radio system has the capability and capacity and also the foundational business agreements for the infrastructure to back-haul to other P25 / ASTRO 25 sub-systems, which means greater interoperability for the entire region. In fact, Bell envisions future growth as additional communities are required to transition.

### **Giving Dispatchers More Tools**

Dispatchers are relied on heavily by everyone using the communications system. “They have computers, cell phones, and radios, so there’s a lot going on at their workstations.” Call takers and dispatchers use Emergency Call Works CallStation phone system, which features call taking, mapping, and reporting. This system helps dispatchers gather information quickly and relay it to the field.

Shannon Krueger is a dispatcher for the Waukesha County Emergency Communications Center. “When a call comes into 9-1-1, we put it up on our CAD screen. The call is plotted onto our map, if it’s a cell phone, or showing an address for a landline,” she says. This saves time in identifying location – all Krueger has to do next is confirm and start processing the call. Krueger notes that she also has the ability to transfer calls easily, and that the mapping feature can help her know if a call is one of many coming in about an accident on the Interstate or if the call is in a different location and might represent a new or different emergency.

Waukesha County 9-1-1 staff attended the Emergency CallWorks Online University prior to implementing the new software to help ease the transition. This enabled call takers, on their schedule, to become familiar with the new system and reduce the time spent with a live trainer from a traditional day-long session to just two hours.

Next Generation 9-1-1 also supports the ability for people in an emergency to call or text, which can be critical if the person can’t talk. Support for images and video can also help identify location when callers aren’t sure where they are or assist with helping first responders see important details – the potential severity of a hiker’s broken bone, or a recent image of a missing child.

“Text messaging is the beginning of the story,” says Bell. “You’re still using your imagination to gather information. But when you start putting pictures and video to that, it’s going to have a different impact in the public safety community.”



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Gary Bell, Director of Emergency Preparedness

## THE BENEFITS

Location mapping helps dispatchers immensely. "Public safety agencies often point out that seconds save lives when in fact it's individuals using the right technology that saves time which can ultimately help save lives," says Bell. When dispatchers immediately see where calls are coming from during a disaster and transfer that information into the mapping feature, they get the big picture.

Enhanced radio features have also made a difference to dispatchers and officers out in the field. "We communicate everything through the radio," says Krueger. "And if we need to get ahold of our officers for a higher priority call, we can use alert toning. It's a vital, important part of our job."

Fire Chief Kevin Bierce agrees. "The radio coverage is a lifeline. When we don't have places that we can communicate from, we have to re-establish that link, which takes much more time." The ability to rely on the radios and the network that supports them is invaluable to fire and safety operations.

Police Chief Joe Rieder notes that, "In law enforcement, communication is everything. Having the technology and the ability to relay messages from the dispatch center to our officers in a timely fashion is essential. We rely on the equipment tremendously. Without it, we would never be able to get our jobs done.

Bell is proud of the community's response and support of the public safety system. Through public survey, the county has established its strategic initiatives where in 'A safe county' received 40% support and ranked as the top priority of its constituents. Therefore, 40 cents on every county tax levy dollar collected has been budgeted to public safety supporting the community's recommendation.

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Looking forward, Bell sees a lot of growth for the Next Generation 9-1-1 system in Waukesha and beyond – as well as a lot of potential to increase efficiency in the department and overall safety in Waukesha County.

Waukesha has embedded long-term planning in its public safety plan, keeping its focus on the community – from how they spend the public's money to how they maintain and cultivate the public trust. As the Emergency Communications Center adapts to the new system, the public can continue to enjoy the outdoors and the beautiful scenery knowing they're better protected than ever before.

## SOURCE

1. [www.911.gov](http://www.911.gov)

For further information about Emergency CallWorks NG9-1-1 Solutions, contact your Emergency CallWorks sales representative or visit [www.motorolasolutions.com/ng911](http://www.motorolasolutions.com/ng911)

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