

Telex Radio Dispatch equipment for New Orleans Mobile Command Vehicle

Background

BearCom, one of the nation's leading Telex wireless distributors, worked together with their Houston branch and communications specialists NACR to provide Telex emergency radio dispatch equipment for Jefferson Parish, Louisiana. The complete package, a new million dollar MCV (Mobile Command Vehicle), is the first of its kind in the suburban New Orleans district.

"BearCom supplied a complete dispatch solution for voice, data, and two-way radio" says Alan Lambert of BearCom. "We met with Colonel Hughes from the Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Department to discuss their needs. Our needs assessment then provided a solution based on exactly what they needed and what BearCom could do for them. Colonel Hughes liked the idea of an integrated IP-based Telex system for combined satellite, radio, and networked communications, because it offered a budget-friendly balance of superior turn-key operation and minimal rack space."

Issue

A major prerequisite was the ability to seat dispatchers in the mobile unit itself without a technical consultant on staff. Another critical point was the ability to be user-friendly. "We received a great testimonial from a former Red Cross employee who had worked with the American Red Cross emergency services during the Katrina Disaster," Lambert continues. "The Red Cross used a substantial number of Telex IP-223s and C-Soft software-based dispatch consoles up and down the Louisiana coast during that time, giving a solid testimony to the equipment's reliability and easy functionality in the field. That credibility was a key factor."

Solution

A combination of 12 Telex IP-223 Dual IP remote adapters—each adapter controlling up to two two-way radio base stations—are connected via C-Soft Windows consoles (via WAN connection) onboard Jefferson Parish's MCV, meaning personnel onboard can remote dispatch first responders and police during times of emergency from a safe position, ensuring reliable communications while emergency services and police address logistics. Events could range from anything from a gas leak to a building evacuation, or even a natural disaster like Katrina. The system quickly connects all emergency services via satellite, or via a networked system, with all systems easily interfaced via the C-Soft screens.

"We explained how we could integrate the Telex console C-Soft software into their IP telephony switch system so the personnel could call into the switch for a link to the console." Lambert adds, "By hitting the patch button we could link any telephone in their system into the console to join the conversation. We can also accommodate Nextel conversations via NI-223 with similar ease. Basically they have a totally interoperable console to link up with and dispatch to all necessary parties during a time of emergency, no matter what's happened to the city communications infrastructure. Our solution is completely flexible, the equipment met the customer's price point, and the final product precisely addresses all of their communication needs."

Results

From an end-user perspective, the customer response has been extremely positive. "We didn't want a system that was overly technical or tricky to use," said Lambert. "In a time of emergency you need to keep things simple and clean, which was what we did with the console and the console setup on the software. The system isn't used every day, so it needs to be intuitive: a click here, a push there, and you're up and running!"

BearCom and NACR will be following up this install with another Telex specification for the parish's second MCV vehicle, which will be used for remote command/scene incident communication duties.