



Overcoming Department Challenges with Updated Software Solutions

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The York County, Pa. Department of Emergency Services' Colossal Challenge

Find a Vendor to Accommodate their Unique Needs and Large Call Volume

The York County, Pennsylvania Department of Emergency Services serves a population of 412,000 residents, receives more than 400,000 calls for service each year and dispatches for 20 Law Enforcement agencies, 35 EMS companies and 69 Fire Departments.

"In 2004, we were one of the largest communication centers in the United States still doing things manually using paper," said Cindy Dietz, 911 Communication Center Deputy Director and CAD Administrator.

The Department of Emergency Services was frustrated with their inability to properly report call statistics and access critical information. With such a large call volume and a growing population, York County desperately needed to overhaul their 911 Communications Center and automate their dispatching capabilities.

In 2004, the county embarked on what would become a \$68 Million project.

The project included building a new facility, a new long-term backup facility, new digital radio and paging systems, new telephone VOIP, and of course, an automated and fully integrated computer aided dispatch (CAD) solution.

Even with the help of a consultant, the county faced a major obstacle: Under Pennsylvania law, the authority for providing public safety services to the general public lies with the local government. The York County Department of Emergency Services is responsible for 72 local municipal governments, each with their own way of handling emergency situations. Further complicating their dispatching procedures, nearly 80% of the firefighters that make up the 69 fire departments are volunteers. As a result, the 911 Communication Center had more than 124,000 different run cards for all the various emergency scenarios. "Because of the size of our operations, we thought we were limited to tier one CAD vendors," said Executive Director Eric Bistline.

In August, 2005 York County Department of Emergency Services chose New World Systems' Aegis/MSP® CAD and Mobile public safety software solution. "New World Systems provided the best solution at the best price," explained Bistline.

During the implementation of the new CAD system, the Department of Emergency Services had two major hurdles to overcome. The first was streamlining their operations and working with New World to accommodate the large number of run card scenarios. The second was helping the dispatchers get used to using computers and the standardization of some processes. "New World has really worked with us," said Dietz.

New World Systems developed several product enhancements to better meet the county's varied dispatching needs.

After a year of implementation and training, the Department of Emergency Services went live on CAD on October 31st. At 4:12 a.m. the following morning, York County had already entered their one-thousandth call into the new system. The county dispatchers, who were originally apprehensive about an automated solution, have become enthusiastic fans.

"With more than 25 years in the industry, New World's software has functionality, ease of use and experienced people behind the product."

— Executive Director Eric Bistline,
York County Department of Emergency Services

Since going live on the new system, the Department of Emergency Services has seen many benefits, including unprecedented access to information and statistics.

"The biggest benefit I see now is the way you can go into the system and do something with the data you have," said Dietz. "It is so much easier to access."

New Data Analysis and Mapping capabilities have also been a huge benefit to the Communications Center. They are now able to easily offer information to the District Attorney's office and law enforcement agencies to help solve crimes.

"From a call taking perspective, CAD has made life much better," said Bistline. "From a reporting standpoint, it is something we were never able to do. Now, within a matter of seconds, we can retrieve information. The system has been invaluable as a reporting tool."

During implementation the county streamlined many of their processes and worked closely with New World.

"A number of software modifications and applications that were made specifically for our needs will serve any similar or Pennsylvania-based agency," said Bistline. "The enhancements New World made for us will serve many customers today and into the future."



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