

CASE STUDY

Lake County, Florida

Communications Technologies Division



Despite its reputation as a rural area, the population of Lake County has grown an astonishing 41% since the year 2000 and is now approaching the 300,000 mark, making it the 23rd fastest growing county in the United States. Tourism is also at an all-time high. These factors have made Public Safety communications in Lake County more important than ever.

LEAD AGENCY

Lake County , Florida
Communications Technologies
Division

SYSTEM MANAGER

Greg Holcomb

CORE APPLICATION

CommSHOP 360°

ENHANCEMENT APPLICATIONS

- WebASSET
- WebSERVICE
- WorkFLOW Alerts
- ID Management
- RFID Interface (*custom development*)

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Infrastructure oversight
- Inventory and property control
- Installation, maintenance, and repair of vehicle equipment
- Programming and repair of radios
- User training and support
- Repair of miscellaneous equipment
- FCC Licensing



SITUATION

In July 2009 Lake County, Florida implemented a consolidated, county-wide, Public Safety radio system. The system, purchased from Motorola, is Project 25 compliant and utilizes the VHF, UHF, 700 MHz, and 800 MHz public safety spectrum. It is owned and operated by the Lake County Board of County Commissioners and allows communications between all law enforcement, fire-rescue, EMS, and Department of Corrections across the County on a single unified radio system. The system's infrastructure consists of 18 tower sites located across the county that provide seamless, reliable, and instant communications for over 3,200 mobiles, portables, and dispatch console radios. To manage the acquisition, installation, testing, and ongoing maintenance of the county's new communication system, the county created a division called the Lake County Communications Technologies Division (CTD), and tasked with leading this new division was Greg Holcomb.

CHALLENGES

With so much responsibility under one roof, Greg Holcomb quickly realized that the legacy patchwork tools in place- email records, paper notes, and excel spreadsheets- would not allow his division to perform to the level of satisfaction required by the Lake County government. As the county was evaluating the purchase of their radio system, Mr. Holcomb recognized the need and opportunity to upgrade the in-house software tools. "We knew with the volume of new subscribers [3,200] we would be managing, there was no way we could adhere to our controller's policies and track all of the service requests without some type of automated solution. In addition to tracking the equipment and recording repair tickets, we had other needs relative to the efficient management of the county-wide radio program that we weren't prepared to meet."

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Mr. Holcomb's references to needs beyond tracking equipment and repair tickets reflected the CTD's plans to expand the current radio communications operation to a full-service, radio communications support shop. A comprehensive solution with the ability to match the growing asset and shop management needs was necessary. Fortunately, county officials agreed with Mr. Holcomb and allowed him to go find the tool he needed.

SOLUTION

The Lake County CTD began to explore the market for an asset and work order management solution by first reaching out to nearby local governments. The results were mixed. Tools ranged from simple spreadsheets and home-grown databases to software programs designed for fleet maintenance or other non-radio operations. Then, Lake County Communications representatives attended a Regional Domestic Security Taskforce meeting where they saw a demonstration of MCM's CommSHOP 360° solution. "It was evident within the first few minutes of the presentation that MCM understood the radio business", Mr. Holcomb said. "Their presentation focused on software functionality that was clearly designed to run a radio shop, which is exactly what we were looking for".

CommSHOP 360° included all the tools needed to track, manage, and maintain the radio equipment and electronic system assets that would be under the CTD's responsibility. In addition to standard asset tracking features, CommSHOP 360° would allow also Lake County to track configuration statistics – radio ID, alias, firmware, flash-code, code plug versions – and also manage the day-to-day shop operations of capturing repair history, tracking usage of consumable parts inventory, keeping record of programming & labor efforts, producing internal and external billing reports, and providing statistical analysis of the Communications Shop operations to ensure efficient management of internal County resources.

The scalability of the CommSHOP 360° solution would allow the Lake County CTD to add Enhancement Apps to the Core App to further ensure all their needs were met. They added WebASSET and WebSERVICE giving access to county subscriber users for viewing asset inventory and submitting service requests, ID Management which allows users to track IDs for the eight radio systems with which the County must interoperate, and WorkFlow Alerts that initiates email and system alerts to the software users and radio system customers when certain milestones are met during the tracking and repair processes. MCM also designed and built an interface to their existing RFID solution.

IMPLEMENTATION AND RESULTS

While the software features and functionality of the CommSHOP 360° Solution were in line with the needs Lake County had presented to MCM, the implementation process would be critical in the success of the solution. MCM's Engineering and Project Management staff worked hand-in-hand with Lake County's Communications Shop employees to assess the business processes already in place, outline an effective plan for implementing the CommSHOP 360° Solution, and enhance the existing workflow processes. To ease the impact of moving to a completely new system, MCM also provided turn-key support for the installation of the software, conversion of existing and new asset and work order data, configuration of the software, and individual user training.

Holcomb said, "We were surprised at how easy the system was to learn and use, but what impressed us the most was that the implementation and training process was based on best practices used in shops similar to ours. The MCM Project Management staff invested their time to understand how we run our business to ensure a successful implementation, and they made sure we know how to use the system to our best advantage. This solution allows us to do more work with fewer resources, which is extremely important in today's economy."

In acknowledgment of the success of the project, MCM's President Tom Bartels added, "We are thrilled to have Lake County as a strong user and reference for our solutions as they represent all that is good in local government through their strong commitment to do their job to the best of their ability. MCM will always stand beside Lake County as a partner to ensure they have the tools they require to continue to operate at such a high level and standard."

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About MCM Technology

MCM has been working in the communications industry for more than 20 years. Using this experience, we have developed a suite of applications that are specifically designed to track, manage, and maintain communications assets. By relying on heavily customizable feature sets and proven workflow processes, we guarantee that our solutions can meet the needs of every communications shop we walk into.



ADDITIONAL CUSTOMER INFORMATION

The Communications Technologies Division's Countywide Radio Program is charged with the acquisition, installation, testing, and ongoing maintenance of all County-owned communications and many ancillary electronic systems. These systems include two-way systems, which operate on VHF, UHF, 700 and 800 Megahertz (MHz). These responsibilities are handled in-house and in concert with a Countywide radio maintenance contract vendor. The Communications Technologies Division's Countywide Radio Section is available 24/7 for emergency situations and emergency repair support and coordination.

All Public Safety first responders within Lake County, including the Lake County Communications Technologies Division participate in the consolidated 700/800mhz Public Safety countywide radio program, owned and operated by the Lake County Board of County Commissioners. This system, which went live in July 2009, allows all law enforcement, fire-rescue, EMS and corrections communications to take place on a single, unified system. This system, purchased from Motorola, Inc., consists of 18 tower sites strategically located across the county to provide seamless, reliable and instant communications for the Lake County Public Safety, Lake County Fire Rescue, Lake EMS, Lake County Sheriff's Office, Florida Highway Patrol (assigned in Lake County area), The Villages and the 14 municipal police and fire departments within Lake County. This system is a Project25 (P25) standards based system, and utilizes the VHF, UHF, 700 and 800 MHz public safety spectrum to communicate with first responders in the field. The system consists of over 3,200 mobile-mounted, portable (hand-carried), aircraft, marine and dispatch console radios countywide.

The Countywide Radio Program provides infrastructure oversight, equipment/tower/shelter management, installation of emergency equipment into County and municipal vehicles, preventative maintenance, user training, inventory and property control, programming and repair of two way radios, maintenance and repair of incident response vehicle electronic systems, FCC licensing, repair of miscellaneous electronic systems such as public address "PA" systems, audio visual support, marine and aviation electronics, satellite and microwave telecommunications, and supporting incident and event responses.

Learn more at lakecountyfl.gov

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If you would like to learn more about our solutions, or speak to some of our customer references, please contact us at (877) 626-6157 or visit us on the web at www.mcmtechnology.com.