GEOLYNX SERVER IMPLEMENTED IN NEW JOINT EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS CENTER

PSAP Consolidation Feasibility Study - Prior to creating the new JECC, GeoComm's consulting group aided Johnson County and Iowa City officials in identifying the specific advantages of consolidating emergency communications and dispatch operations in Johnson County. The recommendations provided in the Consolidation Feasibility Study allowed officials to make informed decisions, included information on how to properly consolidate, and offered solutions on how to overcome potential obstacles that may develop during a consolidation.

In June 2010, after several years of planning, the Joint Emergency Communications Center (JECC) in Johnson County, Iowa opened. The JECC enhanced communication among the different departments and by implementing GeoLynx Server, allowed all of the dispatchers to view a common operating picture of countywide GIS, 9-1-1 calls, track vehicles, and CAD calls for service. The JECC serves Johnson County, Coralville, Iowa City, and North Liberty. The project consisted of assessing the current public safety communications environment in Iowa and providing the Iowa Statewide Interoperable Communications System Board, the 9-1-1 Communications Council, and the ISICB project team with specific recommendations to improve the systems. Presentations were also made at the fall 2011 and spring 2012 NENA/APCO conferences.

The creation of the JECC not only involved the construction of a new state-of-the-art facility, but also the development of a new countywide public safety radio communications system which would allow dispatchers to notify all public safety entities (police, fire, ambulance) with one broadcast. With the previous disparate radio systems used by each agency, an emergency responder for Iowa City could not communicate with a responder from Johnson County. Other changes included a move to a new modern 9-1-1 telephone system located at the JECC facility as well as the back-up location at the University of Iowa Public Safety Department on the university campus. All agencies also began using the similar software for records management (RMS) and computer aided dispatch (CAD).

Johnson County, the City of Iowa City, the City of Coralville, and the University of Iowa Public Safety Department had all previously utilized GeoLynx Desktop for Dispatch GIS. This software was to be relocated to the new consolidated center which would have left the individual agencies without access to GIS which was use for 9-1-1 calls, CAD and AVL. GeoComm proposed GeoLynx Server, a Web-based dispatch GIS application as a solution to this problem. GeoLynx Server allows the dispatchers to easily and effectively share emergency information. This software provides them with a common operating picture of Johnson County's geographic coverage area and shows them where the different types of

emergency response vehicles are located at all times. It also creates a common operating picture by overlaying CAD calls for service and Automatic Vehicle Location on top of the high level of detail GIS maps. In addition, since GeoLynx Server is a Web-based application, the information is also viewable to administrative staff who still work at some of the original dispatch centers, essentially creating a shared situational awareness for all of the users in Johnson County.

"GeoComm was the existing software provider for almost all of the public safety agencies that the JECC is now serving. This made GeoComm the logical choice for our dispatch GIS software needs at the new center. The implementation of our new consolidated center has been a huge undertaking requiring the coordination of multiple vendors. GeoComm's software implementation team has been great to work with as a part of our project," said Tom Jones, Interim Executive Director, Information Technology Manager, Johnson County, IA. "As far as getting our systems installed and ready for operation, GeoComm was one of my project vendors that I did not have to worry about in regard to meeting deadlines, commitments, and delivering a functional application. The communication between the JECC and implementation team was key to the success of the project and they always made themselves available. This is one of the reasons that have made GeoComm one of my preferred vendors to work with."

The new JECC implemented an essential software and communications upgrade. In addition, it is a great example of how intergovernmental cooperation can result in better communication, faster response time by emergency services, and ensures the emergency information is reaching the right person, right away.

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