



Pike County & City of Troy Use 4G LTE to Enable Quicker, More Reliable Communication During Emergencies

Alabama Agencies Deploy Cradlepoint Solutions to Improve Public Safety & Conserve Man-Hours

SUMMARY

When Pike County emergency 911 dispatch, the police, and the fire departments in Troy, Alabama, began updating their systems with high-impact technologies such as Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) and electronic records, local officials knew they would need more reliable, secure connections. In the interest of constantly improving public safety, these agencies needed quicker communication and remote network management – without having to worry about network downtime.

SOLUTION:

COR SERIES, NETCLOUD
MANAGER PRIME

APPLICATION:

IN-VEHICLE

MARKET:

PUBLIC SECTOR, PUBLIC SAFETY

The agencies chose Cradlepoint's COR Series in-vehicle routers with NetCloud Manager (NCM) PRIME to ensure constant connectivity, make critical information available more quickly, and improve cost-efficiencies to maximize taxpayer dollars.

CUSTOMER PROFILE

Pike County has a population of nearly 35,000 people spread out over 672 square miles. Pike County emergency 911 dispatchers work with the police and fire departments in Troy, Alabama, to constantly improve public safety, as well as communication between the agencies. Troy, the county seat, has more than 19,000 residents and is located just south of Montgomery, the state's capital.

AGENCY NEEDS

Significant upgrades in technology for Pike County and Troy police and fire called for similar progress in their ability to keep public safety vehicles connected 24/7. The MiFi devices they had been using for Internet connectivity didn't interface with CAD technology and only stayed on for about four consecutive hours before needing to be charged – just half of a standard eight-hour patrol shift. Even then, the batteries were being strained beyond their limits.

Every time a vehicle would lose its connection, the MiFi devices had to reboot. In the field, with emergencies and dangerous situations often unfolding at a moment's notice, downtime is never acceptable.

"In an emergency, seconds and minutes definitely count," said Chris Dozier, director of Pike County emergency 911 dispatch.



Additionally, given the rigors and unpredictable pace of emergency services, the cruisers and fire trucks needed broadband devices that could easily withstand constant jostling and a wide range of environmental conditions.

From a management perspective, the county's IT team sought remote cloud management capabilities that would allow them to streamline processes and conserve vital public funds.

For the safety of their officers, the police department also needed active GPS enabling real-time tracking, and they wanted it built into the broadband device instead of being forced to use two pieces of hardware.

SOLUTION

After a full bid process and careful product testing, Pike County and the City of Troy chose Cradlepoint's ruggedized COR Series routing platforms with NetCloud Manager (NCM) PRIME as the solution to their wide-ranging connectivity and security needs.

"The COR Series provided the most cost-effective option among devices that met all of the departments' needs," said Troy Chief of Police Randall Barr. "Also, the man-hour savings that come from remote cloud management added a lot of value for us."

BENEFITS

RELIABLE CONNECTIVITY FOR TIMELY COMMUNICATION

Always-on, 4G LTE connectivity through Cradlepoint devices allows these public safety agencies to take full advantage of CAD technology. Critical information entered into one end of the CAD interface instantly shows up on the other end – saving valuable time.

REAL-TIME TRACKING

With the benefit of active GPS, dispatchers are more efficiently protecting the community by tracking the location of public safety units in real time. When a call regarding a burglary, kidnapping, or medical emergency requires immediate assistance, dispatchers can now more quickly determine and send out the officers who are nearest the scene of the emergency.

"Previously, our local agencies had to field a phone call, take detailed notes, and then relay the info to other emergency services departments via the radio. With public safety hanging in the balance, we absolutely needed to find a better solution."

— Chris Dozier, Director, Pike County Emergency 911 Dispatch

Active GPS also provides an added layer of protection for the officers themselves. If an officer is in a life-threatening accident on the road, his or her cruiser can be found from headquarters at a moment's notice, and additional officers can be sent out immediately in response.

"The value of being able to see our officers and vehicles in real time is a huge benefit to our organization," said Capt. Danny Barron of Troy Police.

SEND TO SERVER & SEND TO CLIENT MODES

With the unique ability to operate in Send to Server Mode and/or Send to Client Mode independently, COR Series routing platforms provide these agencies with the flexibility to simultaneously send data to remote servers or have local or remote clients request the data to store in the vehicle or remotely over the LTE connection.

STREAMLINED DEPLOYMENTS & UPDATES

With NCM PRIME, the routers for Troy Police vehicles can all be configured, simultaneously and instantly, without bringing every car into headquarters. Once deployed, small adjustments can be made to individual devices remotely as needed.

Further, NCM PRIME enables multiple police officials to make changes. For example, Chief Barr and his captains intermittently must switch vehicle badge numbers – a task they can easily accomplish via NCM's user-friendly interface.

"It's a tremendous tool for managing a number of units and configuring dozens of devices in bulk instead of one by one," said Capt. Barron.

DURABILITY

With Troy Police and Fire constantly on the move at high speeds in a wide range of terrains, the ruggedized COR Series router's metal housing, shock and vibration protection, and built-in modem are essential.

"When you put a router in every car, if it can be torn up, the officers can find a way," said Chief Barr. "I don't think we're going to be able to tear up these Cradlepoints. The way they're mounted in our car, and with that metal exterior, our officers have been able to rely on these routers all day, every day."

WIFI HOTSPOTS

In the field, Cradlepoint gives Pike County public safety professionals access to WiFi anywhere within 200 yards of their vehicles. This enables them to respond to domestic calls, take pictures at incidents, report in real time, and more.

"Being able to keep the officers in the communities they serve instead of having to zoom back to the station to complete paperwork makes the community safer – and the officers happier. It also helps us form better relationships with the citizens," said Chief Barr.

ENTERPRISE-GRADE SECURITY

With Cradlepoint's enterprise-grade COR Series routers, Pike County IT teams easily set up IPsec VPN tunnels from each vehicle: one tunnel to the city interface and another to the county interface.

"With new technologies comes increased risk of important information being stolen. We couldn't afford to put public information at risk, and Cradlepoint proved we didn't have to. Our network security is as strong as ever, yet we didn't need to add lots of space-eating security equipment," said Barron.

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