

Anaheim Metro Net Taps into the Power of Computer Aided Dispatch

CHALLENGE:

The Anaheim Fire Department consists of 290 full-time paid members including 18 first responder units. For several years the Department had been using a simple handset tracking system through a third-party service to track the location of fire department vehicles and personnel in order to better respond to emergency situations. However the system had many limitations—the data was not timely and therefore not as accurate as emergency situations required, and a stand alone solution was costly. The Department needed an enhanced tracking system to meet rising requirements for emergency preparedness and turned to Sprint Nextel and GeoSpatial Technologies (GST) for a solution that could overcome these challenges.

SOLUTION:

In discussions with Sprint Nextel, the Department's preferred provider of handsets, and GST, its provider of mobile mapping software, the Anaheim Fire Department learned that it could bring together these two premier solutions for an integrated approach that would leverage existing investments and provide superior service in a more cost-effective way. In relatively short order the Department began to use the integrated system and moved from simple handset tracking to a robust and sophisticated solution that tracked both handsets and hard mounted devices.

Location data is tracked from Nextel handsets, Blackberry devices and hard mounts within the vehicles, using a variety of cellular modems, and presented in one common screen for mobile resource management. The GST Tracker system is now a hub for the Department's Automatic Vehicle Location, funneling information to the City of Anaheim's Enterprise Virtual Operations Center (EVOC), Metro Net CAD and GST Tracker software. Any manager can quickly get a report at any time of the activities in the city including active calls via EVOC, where police and fire vehicles are, as well as Global Information Systems data about locations that incorporate details through Google Maps and other sources.

Soon after the initial GST system was deployed, Anaheim was identified as a UASI (urban area security initiative) and eligible for additional funding. One of the major focuses for these post 9/11 funds has been interoperable communications and situational awareness for first responders. The City of Anaheim saw an opportunity to leverage the already existing GST multiple platform system and partner with nearby cities to enhance safety operations



Metro Net is the Communications Center for Orange County, California which dispatches fire and emergency medical services for more than 1.2 million citizens, covering 188 square miles within Orange County.

Metro Net is centrally located in a modern 6,000 square foot facility in the City of Anaheim but is comprised of seven cities in Orange County including: Anaheim, Fountain Valley, Fullerton, Garden Grove, Huntington Beach, Newport Beach and the City of Orange.

The Metro Net facility is equipped with the latest technology in telephone, radio, and computer equipment to assist the dispatcher in quickly processing citizens' calls for assistance. At the heart of the system is the CAD system powered by Geospatial Technologies' Multi-Agency Mobile Mapping and Tracking Interoperability Solution and Nextel devices.

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through data interoperability. The expanded system is now being tested for use by the Metro Net Communications Center that ties together seven cities in Orange County, CA. Additional Agencies within the City of Anaheim have also joined Metro Net including the Police Department, Public Works, Public Utilities, Emergency Operations Center, Planning, Park Rangers and others. Use across Agencies in Metro Net partner cities is growing as well. And in disaster situations such as earthquakes or major sporting events, other Agencies entering the area to assist can be equipped with Nextel ERT handsets and quickly incorporated into the GST Viewer and then into the EVOC and various data management platforms.

BOTTOM LINE:

The GST system and the carriers it supports have enabled the Department to leverage existing investments and reduce overall costs. As a result of superior data quality and timeliness and the ability to integrate with the various information systems, the system has expanded and is becoming an essential tool for safety and situational awareness.

The City of Anaheim and the partner Metro Net agencies have the ability to now track approximately 500 devices including handsets, hard mounts, and Nextel ERT handsets and because of the flexible and open platform can expand the system to up to 800 devices without additional servers. Anaheim continues to enhance and mature the system, for example increasing the frequency of updates received through the tracking system from every two minutes to every 15 seconds/24x7. In the future, Anaheim plans to tap into next generation high-speed tracking solutions from Sprint Nextel and GST for powerful broadband capabilities in a mobile environment.

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“For Departments and Agencies looking for a quick, easy, robust and cost-effective tracking system, I would urge them to consider the Nextel GST solution. The more we learn about the system and its capabilities, the more we want to expand it – it’s a great safety net and a great value.”

– Chief Bob Logue,
Administrative Division Chief,
Anaheim Fire Dept.

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