

Silver Linings for Public Safety Communications

Although 2009 is shaping up to be one of the toughest years for our industry, there are some rays of encouragement.

Trade shows: Attendance at several state APCO conferences has been exceptionally strong. At the Ohio conference, vendor requests even exceeded available space. When I attended a recent conference in Las Vegas, I noticed the traffic was moderate, but consistent and engaging. The talk on the floor included rebanding status of larger, complex systems and in border areas, D-block status and future proceedings, new products, broadband data systems and the stimulus package. Customers, dealers and manufacturers took the time to listen to our industry's status, its current trends and the new directions before us. The APCO Conference & Expo, Aug. 16–20, will provide more specific information about the public safety market, and its complete agenda can be found at www.apco2009.org.

This year's participation at the APCO conference from our vendor partners and sponsors will remain strong. Early vendor and partner commitments for the conference bode well for a positive and beneficial expo. The professional development tracks offered this year will provide our attendees with a vast menu that should match anyone's interests. A complete list of sessions can be found online at www.apco2009.org/dev_tracks.cfm.

For those of you still making your travel arrangements, the prices for hotel rooms in Las Vegas have been recently reduced for the show. If you had booked your reservation through the APCO Web site, you'll receive the new lower rate at our host hotels at check-in.

Local participation: If you are unable to attend the APCO conference, I strongly

urge that you participate at the chapter level and support state or regional vendor events. These are important opportunities for you to gain valuable training, meet your peers and discuss the common aspects of your profession. Also, commercial partners are a great source of information and an avenue for networking. We are a resource for more than company products and services. Just ask and you'll be amazed at the information available and our willingness to assist.

Funding: Our industry is a beneficiary of the stimulus package, receiving more than \$600,000,000. Talk of a second package is ongoing in Washington. The budget bill is working its way through Congress, and it too should include communications projects and grant programs. These projects provide a shot in the arm for the recipients and allow them the opportunity to improve vital communications systems with off-balance-sheet funding. Such funding opportunities as the stimulus package, the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program and PSIC grants will continually flow from D.C. to local entities that are prepared for these opportunities.

Plans should be made in advance for projects for which an application must be completed in a short timeframe. Program guidelines change slightly from year to year, but the theme is consistent: projects must provide improved interoperability among agencies on a regional basis. Funding is expected to continue at levels that create spirited competition among projects. Prepare for this by engaging your representatives on the local, city, county, township or parish level. Then partner with representatives at your state offices and in Washington to sell your need and its regional impact

on the citizens you serve. You *can* get that new system or comm center funded. (By the way, the funding session at the APCO conference is on Thursday morning and titled, "Where are the Grant Funds? Who is receiving them?")

Don't miss the 2009 APCO Conference & Exposition, and begin preparing for funding your communications initiative.

~MICHAEL ENGELHAUPT is vice president of sales and marketing for Futurecom Systems Group Inc. and a commercial advisory committee member.

GIS & MAPPING

New & Improved ArcGIS

On April 28, ESRI began shipping ArcGIS 9.3.1, which helps users create and share modern Web maps relevant to their organization.



This latest version of the system includes an optimized map service for producing high-performance dynamic maps. Improved maps feature sharper edges to features, clearer labels and better color transparency.

ArcGIS Desktop users can fine-tune their maps for faster performance using the new Map Service Publishing toolbar, which allows maps to be analyzed and makes recommendations. Results can be previewed, and estimated draw times are provided. Maps can now be

Technology, Tools & Tips

published directly from the ArcGIS Desktop ArcMap application to ArcGIS Server. Optimized map services also improve map caching performance, because faster rendering speeds reduce the time it takes to create map caches for basemaps. The system's map quality is noticeably improved, and its storage is more efficient.

Users can share the maps through ArcGIS Online, which includes a new application in which users can create an account, search by keyword, find and preview content and then add it to ArcMap or ArcGIS Explorer.

Version 9.3.1 seamlessly connects to Microsoft Virtual Earth services and quickly starts its GIS projects with ready-to-use content at no additional charge. It supports Microsoft's Silverlight Web development platform for building fast, highly interactive Web applications via the new ArcGIS API.

~FYI: www.esri.com

Folsom's LG Mapping Suite

In January, Folsom, Calif., implemented the LGdispatch Community Connect, LGmobile Community Connect and LGroute systems from Geographic Technologies Group Inc.

LGdispatch Community Connect is a mapping interface that provides E9-1-1 dispatchers with an interactive map displaying emergency call locations. It's integrated with AVL, allowing dispatchers to view a unit's real-time location. The program is customizable, allows dispatchers to enter special events and



has the ability to perform historic call mapping, historic AVL mapping and E9-1-1 call mapping.

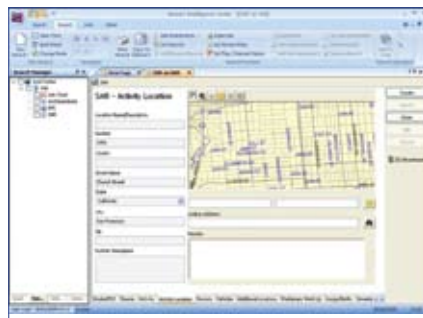
LGroute gives LG Suite users new routing functionality, such as finding

the most efficient travel route, generating travel directions, finding the closest facility or defining service areas based on travel time.

~FYI: www.geotg.com

Memex Integrates Oracle GIS & ESRI

In February, Memex Inc. announced the integration of its search and analysis solutions with Oracle GIS modeling and mapping technology. The company now offers GIS solutions that interface with both Oracle and ESRI.



The North East Ohio Regional Fusion Center is the first to benefit from Memex's expanded GIS capabilities, enabling the center to use its Oracle spatial databases to geocode and analyze data. Analysis is enhanced by the visualization and geographic features made available by interfacing with mapping software.

Memex software and services enable law enforcement agencies to manage and retrieve intelligence that prevents all types of crime. Its solutions, such as Memex Analyst, helps organizations uncover and connect patterns of information on people and events through the intelligence lifecycle. Memex also expands the availability and usability of intelligence through configurable software, flexible workflow management, multi-level security and a robust platform for information sharing.

Memex Director of Product Management Steve Serrao says, "Memex is now integrated with the two key GIS technology companies in the world, giving our customers easy-to-use search and analysis tools along with intuitive interfaces,

robust graphics capabilities and speedy access to actionable information. When law enforcement intelligence analysts use Memex to connect the dots on complex criminal activity, visual mapping plays an important role."

~FYI: www.memex.com & www.oracle.com

Imaging Contract Renewed

On Feb. 26, Pictometry International Corp. announced the renewal and expansion of its oblique imagery contract with San Juan County, N.M. Under the new agreement, Pictometry will capture new oblique imagery of the county along with an additional 245 square miles of LiDAR.

The county began using Pictometry image solutions in 2007. Since then, the imagery has been integrated into various county departments, including the sheriff's department, which relies on the imagery in emergency response and 9-1-1 dispatch, and the county fire department, which use the imagery to locate water sources and access roads during responses. San Juan County assessors also use the imagery to reduce property visits by visually inspecting the properties from their desktop computers. The following county entities will now have access to the new imagery: the cities of Aztec, Bloomfield and Farmington, as well as Farmington Electrical Department, Aztec Ruins, Chaco Culture National Historical Park, San Juan College and BLM Farmington Field Office. The LiDAR component will be used to update the county's digital elevation models and mapping contour lines to identify and update floodplains.

Unlike traditional orthogonal imagery, which produces "roof top" views, Pictometry's aerial image capture process captures imagery from an angle. The oblique imagery reveals greater property detail and provides users with high-resolution views from multiple directions, including overhead. The imagery is geo-referenced and typically licensed to customers together with measuring software. Counties in 48 states currently use Pictometry technologies and often report that savings associated with the

technology offset the initial investment cost in the first year.

San Juan County GIS Coordinator Sandi Spencer says, "San Juan County utilizes Pictometry products in day-to-day operations because the technology enables us to significantly improve our operational efficiencies, reduce expenses, and better manage community growth."

~FYI: www.pictometry.com

GeoComm Update

On Feb. 3, GeoComm was awarded a Texas Department of Information Resources (DIR) contract (DIR-SDD-808). The DIR contract mirrors its GSA IT schedule 70, offering the company's GIS public safety software suite and related IT services at a discounted rate. The contract simplifies the process for Texas state and local government agencies to purchase its public safety GIS software offerings, eliminating the need to go through bidding or other exhaustive competitive pricing procedures.

The contracts are used statewide by both Texas state and local government agencies under delegated authority from the Department of Information Resources. Agencies make best value purchasing decisions according to their own business needs, such as price, warranty and supplier performance.

In March, GeoComm announced that it had met the stringent set of requirements, including customer references, to become a Microsoft-certified partner for networking infrastructure solutions. As a certified partner, GeoComm now has access to training, software and a worldwide knowledge base provided by Microsoft.

~FYI: www.geo-comm.com

TECHNOLOGY

CSI In-Building Solution

On June 12, the digital TV transition will be completed, opening up the 700-MHz frequency band for public safety use. As a result, to support public safety agencies with reliable, in-building wireless communications, Cellular Specialties (CSI) Inc. introduced its 700/800 MHz Signal Booster, the market's only



signal booster that supports both the 800-MHz band and 700-MHz spectrum while reducing interference.

The solution improves first responder communications while underscoring the need for first responders to have uninterrupted communications whether they are traveling, or trapped in a basement, stairwell or office. The 700/800 MHz Signal Booster is designed to give emergency personnel reliable in-building wireless signals and eliminate hazards associated with lost or dropped signals, increasing their safety. It can also be easily installed and maintained.

Reports by In-Building Wireless Association (IBWA) indicate that real estate and public safety are challenged with providing full coverage, saying, "The areas designated as having the greatest need for coverage improvements include parking garages, elevators and open areas." The February 2008 edition of *Automatedbuildings.com* reported that building owners rated the ability to coordinate with local emergency responders as the most important public safety feature they can offer.

For organizations to effectively meet new building code regulations, they must provide solutions for clear in-building, wireless coverage for emergency personnel. Because of these stricter safety standards, the challenge becomes providing solutions that are flexible enough to meet these changing needs without overhauling the entire network.

The 700/800 MHz Signal Booster is fully compliant with NEMA-4 standards, while offering complete power protection in case of an outage. Pricing starts \$5,995 per device.

~CELLULAR SPECIALTIES INC.,

Product Division

FYI: www.cellularspecialties.com/products

DHS Program Helps Agencies with Interop

On May 6, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Office for Interoperability and Compatibility (OIC) announced a major interoperability milestone for the emergency response community. The DHS has formally approved eight laboratories as part of the Project 25 Compliance Assessment Program (P25 CAP). The program will provide more than 60,000 emergency response agencies with a consistent and traceable method to gather P25 compliance information on products.

Managed in partnership with the National Institute of Standards and Technology's Office of Law Enforcement Standards and a coalition of emergency responders and communications equipment manufacturers, P25 CAP establishes an independent compliance assessment process to ensure communications equipment interoperates, conforms to P25 standards and meets performance requirements.

Test laboratories participated in a rigorous and objective assessment process based on internationally accepted standards. Recognized labs include: Compliance Testing LLC, dba Flom Test Lab in Chandler, Ariz.; EF Johnson Technologies in Irving, Texas; Motorola ASTRO System Integration & Test Laboratory in Schaumburg, Ill.; Motorola GP25 HEC-PITEC in Schaumburg, Ill.; Motorola P25 Performance CAI Subscriber Compliance Laboratory in Plantation, Fla.; Tait Electronics Ltd. Teltest Laboratories in Christchurch, New Zealand; TIMCO Engineering Inc. in Newberry, Fla.; and Tyco Electronics Wireless Systems in Lynchburg, Va.

David Boyd, director of the Command, Control and Interoperability Division within the DHS Science and Technology Directorate, says, "P25 CAP will, for the first time, allow the emergency response community to be confident that the equipment they purchase is, in fact, interoperable."

~FYI: www.safecomprogram.gov/

SAFECOM/currentprojects/project25cap

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