

Warren County School District Deploys MOTOTRBO™ for Enhanced Security and Emergency Communications



When a devastating tornado tore through Warren County in 2008, the District Superintendent's Office tried unsuccessfully to contact each of the ten schools in the district but all land lines and cell phone lines in the area were at capacity. Dr. Jerry Hale, Director of Schools, knew there had to be a better way. Just in time for the 2009-10 school year, the district has deployed MOTOTRBO digital Control Stations at each school, providing instant, reliable, secure access for emergency as well as day-to-day communications.

Situation: Tornado knocks out all communications

Nestled in the foothills of the scenic Cumberland Plateau, Tennessee's Warren County is rich with history and civic pride. That pride is especially evident in Warren County's school system, which encompasses ten schools ranging from pre-kindergarten to high school, and serving approximately 6,300 students with a pledge to "educate every student every day." Dr. Jerry Hale, Ed.D., Director of Schools for Warren County, takes this commitment seriously and won't let anything stand in the way, especially the safety and security of the district's students and staff.

In 2008, a damaging tornado swept through the area knocking down trees and destroying property. When Hale's office received notice of the impending storm, district personnel attempted to contact each of the schools, warning them to take the approved precautions. However all available telephone land lines and cell systems were overwhelmed and they could not get through.

"The cell phones weren't working, the land line phones weren't working, parents were trying to call the school, and buses were waiting for orders," recalls Dr. Hale. "Because we couldn't get through to anyone, each school was basically on its own without central communication. Immediately after that experience, we began to look for an emergency system where this would never happen again."

Products

- MOTOTRBO Control Stations, includes:
 - MOTOTRBO XPR™ 4550 mobile radios
 - Desktop microphones
 - Speakers
 - Power supply with back-up battery
- MOTOTRBO XPR™ 8300 Repeater

Benefits

- Significantly improved student and staff safety
- Increased privacy and security
- Rapid communications via wide area broadcast or one-to-one



"All I have to do is push the transmit button to speak to anyone at our schools or our alternative locations either privately or as a whole broadcast. If a crisis occurs at any of our locations, personnel can send me an emergency transmission and I can monitor the situation without the trespasser even being aware; allowing me the opportunity to contact 911. Our system-wide SRO is also able to hear each transmission and can respond immediately upon hearing of a situation."

- Joye Fuston, C.L.A.,
Administrative Assistant,
Warren County Schools

School district looks for a reliable emergency communications strategy

Dr. Hale contacted Communications Evolutions, a local Motorola channel partner to discuss a cost-effective strategy that would reduce reliance on land-line phones, enable him to quickly and efficiently communicate with each school, and improve campus security and emergency response throughout the school district. Specifically Dr. Hale wanted a solution that would facilitate an "all-schools alert" via wide area broadcast; the ability to do private calls so his office could speak to a school representative one-on-one when necessary; and the security that would prevent eavesdroppers with radio scanners from listening in to school business.

Finally, the solution needed to offer the ability for the individual schools to send a duress call. "We fortunately have never had a shooting in this district," says Dr. Hale. "However, we wanted to give teachers the ability to hit an emergency button that would send out a silent alarm in the event that something did happen."

Solution: MOTOTRBO Digital Control Stations

Richard Myers, a representative of Communications Evolutions, recommended MOTOTRBO digital control stations. The solution used MOTOTRBO digital two-way mobile radios, desktop microphones, speakers, and an emergency power supply with battery back-up to create a flexible, powerful, but compact and user-friendly desktop base station. The MOTOTRBO control stations were installed at each of the county's ten schools, as well as in the school district's administration, maintenance, and bus offices.

The digital solution integrates both voice and data capabilities and because MOTOTRBO operates in dual mode (both analog and digital), the solution provides the district with full communications capability not only with the school staff, but also with the existing analog radios used by the district's 60+ school bus drivers. In addition, MOTOTRBO provides a cost-effective migration to digital technology.

"Warren County is currently looking into the prospect of tying our bus fleet into the digital two-way radio system, which will allow us to stay in constant contact with our drivers and find their location during emergency weather conditions and other concerns," says Donny Caldwell, Warren County School Board, Director of Facilities.

The MOTOTRBO radios reach throughout the 450 square mile county, using a mountaintop repeater equipped with emergency battery backup. "They only needed one repeater," says the Motorola channel partner. "We ran comprehensive tests off this site with the mobiles and control stations and found no coverage gaps at all."

“The quality and reliability of these radios is excellent. We’re just excited about the possibilities of what we can do with them, both now and in the future.”

– Dr. Jerry Hale, Director of Schools, Warren County, Tennessee

Results: Instant, secure, reliable emergency and day-to-day communication

With the beginning of the new school year, the MOTOTRBO radios were ready for action. Although they have only been in place for a few weeks, already they have proven their value.

“All I have to do is push the transmit button to speak to anyone at our schools or our alternative locations either privately or as a whole broadcast,” says Joye Fuston, CLA, administrative assistant, Warren County Schools. “If a crisis occurs at any of our locations, personnel can send me an emergency transmission and I can monitor the situation without the trespasser even being aware; therefore allowing me the opportunity to contact 911. Our system-wide SRO is also able to hear each transmission and can respond immediately upon hearing of a situation.”

The MOTOTRBO digital two-way radios had all of the features the District required.

Greater safety with instant “all-call” communications: With the push of a single button, the Superintendent’s office can send out alerts or emergency information to all schools simultaneously, without relying on land-line or cell phone communications.

Enhanced privacy with one-to-one communications: The MOTOTRBO radios also provide private call capability, enabling the Superintendent’s office to initiate or receive calls from an individual school, without ‘radio chatter’ disturbing the other schools.

Increased campus security with emergency duress signal: In case of emergency, such as an intruder on school grounds, an emergency duress signal can be discretely sent, giving the suspect no indication that the call for help has been made. “The signal is programmed to send an emergency alert to the Superintendent’s office as well as to the maintenance office as a back-up,” says the Motorola channel partner. “When they receive the call, they can monitor and listen on the live mic so they can actually hear what is going on.”

Confidential communications with digital technology: Because the technology is digital, those listening in on scanners cannot hear the transmissions, providing the schools with greater security and privacy. “A lot of people like to listen to the scanners,” says Dr. Hale. “People tend to hear something minor, misinterpret it, and by the time it makes the circle, it’s graduated to a catastrophe. When something is taken out of context, it’s hard to control. This technology will help prevent that from happening.”

“The quality and reliability of these radios is excellent,” says Dr. Hale. “We’re just excited about the possibilities of what we can do with them.”



Motorola MOTOTRBO XPR Digital Radios



About Partner

For over 30 years, Communications Evolutions has provided wireless solutions to local, state government and enterprise customers throughout middle Tennessee. As a Motorola Service Center since 1973; a Motorola Radius two-way radio dealership since 1988; and a Full Line Motorola Two-way Radio Dealership since 1991, Communications Evolutions is proud to represent Motorola in both sales and service.

Looking Forward - GPS capability for student and bus driver safety

The District accessed funding from the Safe Schools grant to finance the new MOTOTRBO digital system. When additional funding becomes available, the District hopes to someday equip each school bus with MOTOTRBO radios with GPS capability. "We see the value in giving our drivers the capability to send an emergency distress signal from the bus if they have a situation," says Dr. Hale. "With GPS, we'll be able to find their exact location and get help out to them immediately."

To learn how you can benefit from the MOTOTRBO's digital capabilities visit motorola.com/mototrbo



MOTOROLA

Motorola, Inc. 1301 E. Algonquin Road Schaumburg, Illinois, 60196, U.S.A. 1-800-367-2346

MOTOROLA and the Stylized M Logo are registered in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. All other product or service names are the property of their respective owners.
© Motorola, Inc. 2008