

Press Release

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Dubuque County, Iowa, migrates to digital paging

Dubuque County, Iowa, is migrating its analog voice paging for its volunteer fire fighters to a state-of-the-art DiCal digital alerting solution. In conjunction with an upgrade to P25 for their voice communication, Dubuque County wants to improve performance within their fire and EMS response. This requires faster and more reliable paging of their volunteer fire services to reduce response times

DiCal is a complete digital alerting solution from Swissphone including network components and pagers. The system offers more cost effective network coverage, faster alert and response times and very high system resilience due to self-monitoring of the network, several fallback modes in case of a failure of a component, and fallback clients in order to alert even if the CAD system is down.

Coverage and flexibility

Like many volunteer fire agencies, they have struggled with reliable, in-building pager coverage across their county. "The Swissphone DiCal architecture is completely unique in its ability to put base stations anywhere you need them for coverage, without requiring expensive backhaul connectivity," says Tom Berger, Epworth Fire Chief and Dubuque County EMA Coordinator and E911 Chair. "That gives us enormous flexibility to get coverage where we need it at minimal additional expense. No one else can offer that."

Pager for now – and the future

"Text messaging isn't just the future. It's now. It's simply faster and easier than tone/voice for fire fighters and dispatchers. We're seeing several counties in Iowa that are making the same transition to text messaging with RACOM and DiCal," says Tom Berger. Swissphone's s.QUAD pagers offer best-in-class sensitivity to receive radio signals even in very remote locations; they are extremely robust and loud, and run up to three months on a single battery. In addition, they allow first responders to respond back to an alert.

Dubuque is a county in the east of Iowa with 96,000 inhabitants and a size of 617 square miles. Its fire service organization contains 13 fire departments, operating out of 21 fire stations with a total of 550 first responders. On average, they handle about 7,600 calls for service annually.

Dubuque's system will be a 12-site, multi-primary, multi-ring design providing countywide 8dB indoor coverage, with 15dB indoor coverage in towns. In addition to alerting fire and EMS personnel, it will also be used to activate all the outdoor warning sirens.

Cooperation Swissphone/RACOM

The solution is commissioned and installed by RACOM Corporation, a leading P25 solutions provider and Swissphone DiCal partner. RACOM has previously commissioned and installed P25 solutions with DiCal digital paging in other counties in Iowa. "DiCal is a great supplement to our P25 value proposition for digital voice communication. It allows our customers to resolve their paging issues once and for all by migrating to digital alerting - for about 5% of the total P-25 project cost. DiCal is a great complement to our portfolio," says Terry Brennan, Vice President of RACOM. Swissphone is a leading alerting company that has built more than 300 alerting networks worldwide. Head office is in Zürich, Switzerland, its North American subsidiary is based in Winsor, Colorado.

To learn more about how Swissphone can help you increase the coverage of your existing analog network even before a migration to digital paging, please consult our whitepaper "Keys to a Smooth Migration to Digital Alerting".

Swissphone stands for secure alerting and efficient communication

We produce robust pagers, design secure alerting networks and develops innovative software solutions. Our products and solutions support each and every stage of the alerting process; from triggering an emergency call to coordination in the 911-center, right through to the transmission of alerts over the network to the pagers. This turnkey alerting solutions fulfill the highest demands of public safety organizations all over the world.

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