



CASE STUDY:

Memphis/Shelby County Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) Region Turns to Satellite Network for Interoperable Communications

The Situation

The Memphis/Shelby County UASI region is located in the heart of the Mid-South, right on the banks of the Mississippi River in the New Madrid Seismic Zone (NMSZ). The Memphis/Shelby County UASI region includes Shelby, Tipton, Fayette and Lauderdale counties in Tennessee, Crittenden County in Arkansas and DeSoto County in Mississippi, and is a center of transportation and shipping for the United States.



The Challenge

The Memphis/Shelby County UASI region needed a fast, easy, and effective way to provide interoperable communications with schools, businesses, and citizens before, during, and after catastrophic events.

This region has two natural disaster concerns that prompted it to search for a point-to-multipoint communication system: 1) the threat of dangerous earthquakes along the NMSZ and, 2) the need to improve communications in light of increased tornado and flooding activity across the Mississippi Valley.

The Solution

To meet these requirements, the Memphis/Shelby County UASI Region used a portion of its UASI grants funding designated for one of its Interoperable Communications Projects to purchase more than 250 MSAT-G2 satellite radios and service subscriptions. UASI grants provide funding for emergency response agencies in areas that are considered high-risk for natural or man-made disasters and are located within one of the specific Department of Homeland Security (DHS) designated urban areas, such as Memphis. "This is an excellent illustration where the public and private sectors have come together and worked in unison to develop a solution for a public safety requirement," said Bob Nations Jr. director, Shelby County Office of Preparedness HLS/EMA.

According to county planners, more than 230 mobile units in hardened travel cases with power adaptors will be placed with emergency response agencies throughout the Memphis/Shelby UASI region where they can be readily deployed during emergencies. The rest of the satellite devices will be deployed in critical command and control facilities including the county Emergency Operations Center, the Memphis Police and Fire Department headquarters, and other UASI emergency management locations.



Memphis at night

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