City of Augusta
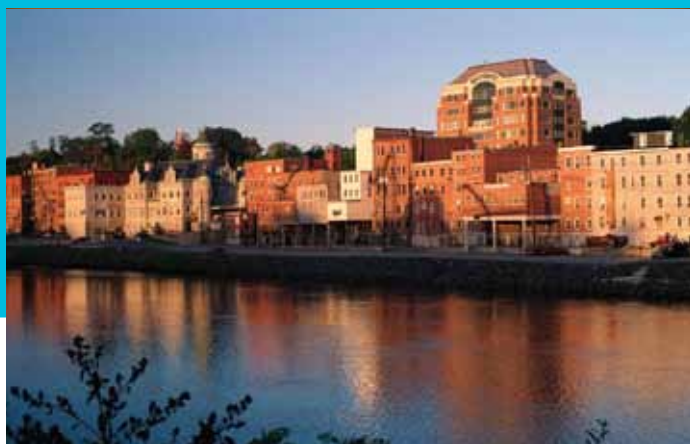
Maine, USA

Case Study

THE CUSTOMER

Located on the Kennebec River, the City of Augusta is the State Capital of Maine. It covers 59 square miles with a population of 18,500.

Augusta Public Safety Dispatch services Fire, Police and Emergency Medical Services. Augusta has mutual aid with neighboring communities and shares one of three sites with Maine State Police.

SITUATION

The City's 25-year-old analog network did not meet current Public Safety standards. Wayne McCamish, Retired Police Chief, explains: "The radio system left Public Safety workers in the Dark Ages. There were numerous locations where Police and Fire individuals were not able to communicate. This left major gaps in the flow of information and in requesting additional assistance."

To improve coverage in the urban and rural areas, the City replaced their network. Ralph St Pierre, Assistant City Manager, explains: "With Department of Homeland Security funding, we made a conscious effort to upgrade the City's communications to a digital radio network."

The new solution would provide:

▸ maximum coverage in the City's urban and rural areas,

▸ reliable digital voice communications for Police, Fire and EMS operations,

▸ digital and analog modes for voluntary Fire teams and mutual aid,

▸ connection to state-wide network for interoperability.

"I have been doing this job for 37 years and almost for the entire 37 years we took for granted that we were not going to be able to talk on portable radios in specific locations.

Now we can talk on our portable radios in areas where we have never been able to in the past. The system has exceeded our expectations."

Wayne McCamish - Retired Chief of Police City of Augusta

RESPONSE

The City of Augusta selected a three-site TaitNet P25 conventional simulcast network comprising:

▶ four narrowband 12.5kHz channels in 150-174MHz VHF band,

▶ existing analog paging for Fire volunteers,

▶ interconnectivity with fiber-optic link and microwave.

The new network has two channels for Police tactical units and two for Fire teams. Ralph St Pierre describes the channel management practices: "Police and Fire use one channel for active and the other for incident. If there is an incident they will switch to the second channel and keep the first channel open."

"When we require mutual aid from neighboring communities we have a second alarm for emergencies. Volunteer firefighters from the area are not P25-compliant, so the Tait P25 system had to accommodate both analog and digital, which we were able to accomplish."

Jerry Vargas, Tait Senior Systems Engineer, elaborates: "From network design, project management, installation, commissioning and training, we made sure the city got the results they wanted."

Radio Consultant Ken Knight continues, "Tait engineers and project managers assigned to the project made a huge difference to the overall implementation of the radio network."

OUTCOME

Coverage has substantially increased, according to Retired Police Chief Wayne McCamish: "The system cleared up the vast majority of places in the city, on the roads and in buildings where we had limited coverage. We now feel safer in providing services to the citizens of our city."

Ralph St Pierre explains, "Interoperability is the ultimate goal and we plan on connecting our system to Maine's state-wide system as it upgrades in the near future."

MORE INFORMATION

For news, product specifications, comprehensive technical information and contact details of your nearest Tait service facility, please visit www.taitradio.com

CUSTOMER PROFILE

City of Augusta Public Safety Dispatch services Fire, Police and Emergency Medical Services.

BUSINESS BENEFITS

▶ Substantial increase in coverage

▶ Interoperability with neighboring counties for mutual aid

▶ Future connection to state-wide network

▶ Digital/analog dual modes including analog paging for Fire volunteers

▶ Narrowbanding-compliance