



Rugged Tools for a Tough Job: Results and Value in Chester County



"The top benefit we've realized since introducing the ML900 notebooks is the speed and accuracy of the information exchange. This increases everybody's situational awareness, safety, and efficiency."

– Ed Atkins, Director, Chester County Department of Emergency Services

Situation: 100 Departments with a Common Goal

The Chester County (PA) Department of Emergency Services (DES) coordinates with 73 municipalities and more than 100 public safety departments. With Homeland Security funds available, the question for DES and its allies was how to best apply this resource toward their shared goal of keeping the county and its citizens safe.

The county decided to upgrade the mobile data capabilities of multiple agencies. "We are not a single source county," says John Haynes, the county's Deputy Director for 911 Operations. "Each municipality runs their own system. Any mobile system needs to function effectively for each response organization."

Solution: Rugged Notebooks for Mission Critical Mobile Intelligence

With a \$6 million grant, the county deployed Motorola ML900 Rugged Notebooks "in every police car, every ambulance, and two or three in each fire department," says DES Director Ed Atkins. "All the responders – police, fire and EMS – are seeing the same information as soon as we get it. That improves safety, and it improves service to the citizens."

Result: Preemptive Data for Those Who Serve and Protect

"The ML900 has far exceeded our expectations," says Haynes. "It has become the primary source of data transfer between the 911 center and the field users." A closer look shows how the ML900s are yielding significant value on Chester County's investment.

County Population

466,000

7% growth 2000-2004

Fastest-growing county in Pennsylvania

Size

762 Square Miles

Public Safety Entities

Over 5,000 personnel

45 law enforcement departments

58 fire, rescue and EMS companies

Mobile Data Solution

Motorola ML900 Rugged Notebooks deployed throughout the county, integrated with a variety of legacy applications and networks



Interoperability

“Mobile data has made a great impact in terms of interoperability. By typing a few keystrokes, agencies can now determine what’s going on anywhere in the county. There is so much information coming over that notebook that we weren’t getting by voice. It makes a huge difference in the quality of our responses.”

– Peter Mango, Chief of Police in East Fallowfield Township

“We’re able to interact with other departments before we get to the scene. On mutual aid, we can see their data, review their call stream, get our assignment, and be ready when we arrive.”

– Glenn Allison, President of the county Fire Chiefs Association



Fast Response

Agencies are often called outside of their normal first response areas. In Chester County, the ML900 is helping efforts through GPS mapping to the quickest route.

“Live data played a key role in a recent water rescue outside the district of the responding company. Using the notebooks, they were able to retrieve specific directions to the scene and get there much faster,” says Glenn Allison.

In addition, Chester County is growing rapidly. “We had 300, 400 homes popping up, with little cul de sacs you might not recognize. The ML900s provide addresses, cross streets – all the details. They play a key role in response every day,” says Peter Mango.

Disaster Prevention and Planning

In times of crisis, having a mass casualty plan is vital to help ensure that responders understand their exact roles.

Disaster plans are pre-loaded on Chester County’s ML900 notebooks. “Data is vital to ensure safety in situations that involve chemicals or biohazards or where the scene is not secure. Knowing whatever the hazard may be, so we can prepare before we arrive, can be a matter of life and death for EMS providers,” says John Felicetti, President of the county EMS Council.

More Time on the Street

“Officers can file reports right from their cars,” says John Haynes, “where they used to go back to their stations and take hours off patrol. That has been a major contributor allowing police departments to upgrade their visibility while maintaining the workload.”

“You get a more complete report while it’s fresh in your mind,” adds Allison. “The volunteers are strapped for time and the more we can get done locally, the less we have to do when we get back.”



"It's an interesting business we're in. The equipment gets used well, but it gets used hard. When we're choosing a mobile data device, it needs to be reliable, maintainable, and able to expand into the future. We have about 5,000 emergency responders and they need to believe their equipment is going to work every time."
 — Ed Atkins

Value: Reduced Total Cost of Ownership

Compared to consumer-grade laptop computers, the ML900 will cost less over the long term. It has a longer life span, requires less maintenance and user support, and allows the county to leverage prior investments in mobile data. It will keep working as departments introduce new applications and networks. And it will experience less downtime in a job where the cost of failure is measured in more than money alone.

Rugged Build

The ML900 meets MIL-STD 810F and IP54 standards. It can survive the heat at a fire scene, the bumps over bad roads, and the driving rain of a major storm. "These computers are not always well taken care of," says Haynes. "They are in work vehicles and used by many different people, often in a high-stress environment. The maintenance rate is much lower than we had expected. We've been extremely impressed."

Designed for Public Safety Users

The ML900's touch screen and easy interface are important features that minimize support costs and help people work efficiently. "It has to be user-friendly," says Atkins. "We can't have a piece of equipment that takes so much training that people aren't doing their primary job."

"With our old technology, the fonts were small and difficult to read, particularly in bad lighting conditions," says Mango. "The ML900 has a much larger font and better lighting, and it's clearer to read."

Works with Existing and Future Networks

The ML900 has four integrated wireless radios, giving agencies a choice of network technologies:

- WLAN 802.11a/b/g and/or MOTOMESH™ 4.9GHz
- WWAN including Motorola DataTAC™, EVDO or UMTS
- Bluetooth® and IR
- GPS Receiver

"We needed something that was expandable as technology grew," says Haynes. "As we move to streaming video, broadband becomes not a luxury but an essential part of our daily operations." The ML900 is ready for broadband.

Integrates with Other Systems

"We haven't had to turn anyone down for a new application," says Haynes. "One of the impressive things about the ML900 is the fact that it really works with other systems and hardware."

Fast and Flexible Implementation

"The implementation went very quickly," says Haynes. "It was less than a year until the last unit was put in. Of course, 'the last unit' is a misnomer because there's always another police car." ML900s can be re-deployed as vehicles are replaced, and new notebooks can be added as the fleet grows.

“I’ve been working with Motorola products for over 30 years, including mobile radios, portable radios, computers, pagers, and cell phones. I’ve always found their products to be very reliable, dependable when we need them, and a great way to communicate critical information.”

– Peter Mango, Chief of Police, East Fallowfield Township

Over 65 years of understanding the needs of public safety

In today’s world you need a partner who understands what Mission Critical is all about: the lives and well-being of your employees and the citizens they protect. That’s why Motorola is a leading provider of interoperable communications systems for public safety and first responders. Our experience in the public sector, along with our skills, people, partnerships and alliances, allow us to build innovative, fully integrated technologies that help organizations like yours share vital information with ease and confidence. We’ve been doing it for 65 years, and we’ll be standing by our customers for years to come.

We are committed to bringing all our knowledge and technical expertise together so you can focus on what you do best...to serve and protect the public.



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