



# JONESBORO IS FIRED UP ABOUT FSA I/O

HOW A LOW-COST SOLUTION TRANSFORMED EMERGENCY SERVICES



## THE CHALLENGE SEEKING GREATER RELIABILITY WITH SMALLER BUDGETS

The City of Jonesboro, a thriving municipality of 70,000, home to Arkansas State University (ASU) and major companies like NicePak and Nestle, was outgrowing its emergency dispatch capabilities as times and technologies changed. As Jeff Presley, E911 Director for the City and Craighead County describes, “We were using an analog paging system that was antiquated, trying to patch into the State’s new digital 700/800MHz radio system. We needed to find something reliable, a secure pathway between our system and AWIN—the Arkansas Wireless Information Network.”

“We were having some failures during fire paging,” says Presley, “The patch would shut down and we’d lose our tones, lights in the fire stations and all our paging capabilities. We would have to call stations directly using voice. If there was a large thunderstorm, it would knock the patch out.”

While the City of Jonesboro had a back-up plan in place when the system failed, including voice communications directly to all seven fire stations, the E911 Director felt, “We were tying an antiquated system into a new digital one. It was time to move forward.”

## CUSTOMER PROFILE

- City of Jonesboro and Craighead County, AR
- Combined population of 120,000
- 4th largest city in Arkansas
- 2nd largest land mass in state (700 sq. miles)
- 7 fire stations, 120 paid firefighters

## 911 DISPATCH CENTER

- 19 full-time dispatchers
- 4 primary console workstations
- Handle 250,000 calls a year
- Fire console linked to FSA I/O and statewide AWIN
- Fully integrated with digital mapping, automatic vehicle locator, CAD

## FSA I/O SOLUTION

- Cost effective version of FSA4000 Fire Station Alerting
- Ties easily into existing infrastructure
- Delivers scalable, flexible, dual link communications
- Seamlessly interfaces with existing consoles and CAD
- NFPA 1221 standard compliant
- Modular to grow with your community; easy to add new sites

**“What was most important was a system that worked 100%. I wanted it to be as foolproof as I could get it.”**

Leonard Jadrich, Fire Chief, Jonesboro Fire Department

## THE SOLUTION

### USE EXISTING EQUIPMENT COST-EFFECTIVELY

Knowing time was of the essence, Jeff Presley took his concerns to the Mayor, Fire Chief and the City Council who declared a state of emergency to initiate funding. Presley and a panel of firefighters, dispatchers and IT directors reviewed specs and quotes from different vendors to determine a dollar amount. "After looking at the equipment and maintenance, we decided that Motorola's FSA was the way to go. I'm a true believer in a one call, one vendor set-up."

Following that he explains, "We all met—public safety committee, fire service, the utility company—and had it approved in one meeting, the City Council agreed for full payment." Even more remarkable, in the wake of a challenging economy, a private individual stepped up to provide all the funding.

### STATE THE CASE TO THE STATE

With funding secured, the team went to get state approval as the FSA I/O system was going to be working with their wireless network. "We were the first one in the state to go to the FSA4000 Fire Station Alerting with the AWIN system. It was breaking new ground for them also," says Presley. "I explained we had to move forward because we had lost our paging capabilities."

"With the help of Joe Jackson and his contacts in Little Rock, we got the system moved through very quickly," Presley adds. Because the State Steering Committee met only once every three months and Jackson had to also install a T1 line in Little Rock, the process took longer than typical FSA I/O installations—eight months from start to "go live".

### KEEP WORKING WHILE YOU'RE WAITING

Joe Jackson, President of Douthit Radio Service Inc., Pine Bluff, Arkansas, was not only instrumental in introducing the City of Jonesboro to the Motorola FSA I/O solution, but working with the system managers and readying it at all seven fire stations until state approval came through. "From day one, Joe and his crew met with us, explained all the steps, and trained the dispatchers on all three shifts, even those starting at midnight," recalls Jeff Presley.

**"I am sold on the FSA product.  
There isn't a better one out there."**

Joe Jackson, President  
Douthit Radio Service Inc., Pine Bluff, AR

Jackson, a Motorola reseller, and his technicians were so committed to a successful outcome, they worked long hours to install gateway equipment at the state capital and the FSA I/O into the existing infrastructure. Despite a freak snowstorm and long-distance drives from Pine Bluff to Jonesboro, Jackson says the installation went smoothly and "The effort to interface it into Jonesboro's console and statewide system went very well. It was fairly seamless."



## THE BENEFITS

### EXPERIENCE RELIABILITY LIKE NEVER BEFORE

"I wanted to make the system as automatic as possible and reduce the possibility of human error," says Chief Jadrich. Prior to the FSA I/O at all seven stations, "Our firefighters were sleeping with their radios, with all the stations open because they were afraid to miss a run. They would be woken up at 3:00 a.m. for a call for another station. Now they don't have to sleep with their radios open. They are comfortable knowing the system is going to work." The results are immediate too, emphasizes the Chief. "We're getting pages right away. Because of that, our response is quicker."

"The fire chief, training officers, battalion chiefs, everybody has been positive about it, very excited about the way the system sounds," adds Jeff Presley. "Before we had a lot of distortion, a lot of interference with the old system tied to analog. One of the big deals I have heard from every firefighter is it is crystal clear."

**"We tried another radio in the past, but it was garbled and didn't hold up. We got rid of all those and only buy Motorola. The quality of the audio is very good."**

Leonard Jadrich, Fire Chief  
Jonesboro Fire Department

### STAY CONNECTED AND IN CONTROL WITH IP

While Jonesboro is using basic functions at the beginning—such as heart saver tones and automatic lights in the quarters, bays and battalion chief's office—the gains in reliability and redundancy have already been significant. "It's been working great," notes Jeff Presley.

"One of the selling points for the Fire Chief was that it has IP backup, so if the radio frequencies go down, you do have a back-up for this system." The system's 24/7/365 reliability, automatic redundancy and NFPA 1221 standard compliance has made it possible for Chief Jadrich to rest easier, too. "I can go home on a Saturday and not have to worry about the guys getting toned out."

### SIMPLIFY DISPATCH AND SPEED RESPONSE

"With the FSA, we know the system is right there on our screen, all the time, ready to go. With the integration into the CAD system, it's made dispatching simple," says Jeff Presley.

"During a commercial fire, our dispatchers simply highlight the stations, hit the page and it's gone. They don't have to select individual stations or set off alerts depending upon the incident. It saves quite a lot of time." Thanks to the FSA I/O, dispatchers know each alert has been received—saving critical minutes, eliminating confusion and reducing human error.

"The biggest thing to me was we had severe thunderstorms that came through and we went on back-up power," describes Presley. "I was prepared for it because that was the routine in the past. The FSA system stayed up and running the whole time. We never had a blink in the system, no problems at all."

### ACT NOW INSTEAD OF REACTING DOWN THE ROAD

"The FSA is a system you can grow into," explains Jeff Presley. "Get the initial system implemented first. If you're a city like Jonesboro that's growing, you can adapt it quickly for new equipment and new stations." Because Jonesboro is the first in the state, they've broken new ground. "We've gotten the FCC okay, and the state okay now. That documentation was part of our delay."

Joe Jackson of Douthit Radio believes you need to take a serious look at the costs associated with your current system. "The FSA I/O is not an expensive system," he points out. "If you're using dedicated phone lines, the cost alone of those in a four year period will pay for this system."

Over at the E911 Center, Jeff Presley values the capabilities the FSA I/O delivers today and the possibilities tomorrow. "We looked at 10 years down the road and asked ourselves, will this system be up and running as we add new stations and apparatus? And the answer is yes."

**"It's one call, one vendor and it's compatible with all our systems in place at 911."**

Jeff Presley, E911 Director  
City of Jonesboro and Craighead County, AR



Remote Terminal Unit (RTU)

**"We use the FSA tones to our advantage. We can set them up for single engine response when it is not a pressing ordeal. For commercial fires, tones that are sent out are different – they hear this before they ever hear the voice."**

Jeff Presley, E911 Director  
City of Jonesboro and  
Craighead County, AR

For more information on how to transform your emergency services with the FSA I/O or FSA4000 Fire Station Alerting System, visit [www.motorola.com/fire](http://www.motorola.com/fire) or contact your local Motorola representative.

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