



April 2020 Newsletter

April 2020

Coping with COVID19

Plan, Test, Execute – A Blueprint for Success

Public Safety and First Responders have been on the front lines of the COVID 19 crisis from the beginning. As a group, they have been challenged to continue to perform their normal duties as there is no shutting down public safety functions. Public safety agencies have created new and innovative ways to accomplish their functions to ensure the safety and well-being of the communities they serve.

One of our clients, **the city of Alexandria Virginia**, met this challenge head on by looking at various aspects of their duties to determine how best to continue top quality services to citizens, given the multitudes of impediments resulting from COVID-19. The guiding principle throughout this process was to maintain the level of services regardless of the direction of the CoronaVirus. Fortunately, the Department of Emergency and Customer Communications ("DECC") had a place to start. They had previously developed a detailed Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP), which included a comprehensive pandemic response component. When it first became apparent to them in late January that they could be facing a pandemic, DECC went into action. They began by reviewing the COOP and identifying what action would be needed to actually implement the pandemic portion of the plan.

The basic pandemic plan consisted of 3 separate phases.

Phase 1 – Split the Comm Center into 2 Separate Physical Locations

The focus of Phase 1 was addressing the staffing changes that were likely to occur as a result of infection or quarantine, changes and swings in both call types and volume of calls, and social distancing challenges

Their goal was to create a space where the dispatchers could operate without the necessity of wearing masks, primarily through moving some telecommunicators to the back-up center. As the city already maintained a 2nd location in a hot-standby mode, implementation was straight forward. In early March, the city moved one half of the staff to the standby facility. The 2 facilities mirrored each other closely. The city's 311 staff moved to a different location within the primary building to provide additional social distancing. The Center practiced precautionary virus measures, including wearing masks into the building, temperature taking upon entering the building, thorough and frequent scrubbing of both facilities, and providing additional cleaning measures between operational shift changes.

The testing process for Phase 2 was the most difficult portion of the plan. Phase 2 required very specific technology and capabilities that would allow the agency to disperse staff to multiple remote locations. This was the 1st time that the city would be utilizing these planned capabilities.

Winbourne Consulting offers a full range of public safety services, including strategic planning, systems integration, specifications development, solution acquisition, and implementation project management and quality assurance.

Our Areas of Expertise encompass

all segments of Public Safety, including:

- PSAP Consolidation
- NG911 Strategic Planning and Implementation
- Public Safety Communications and Telephony
- Public Safety Applications and Systems Requirements and Implementation Support
- Mission Critical Facilities Design and Fit-Out
- 311 Call Centers and Implementation
- PSAP Staffing and Operations Analysis

Clients include city, county, state, and federal agencies located throughout the

DECC needed to duplicate the three legs of dispatching, which is receiving a call, logging a call into computer aided dispatch (CAD) and dispatching the call to the first responders.

- a. The city utilized their existing Next Gen 911 and IP-based technologies provided by FirstNet. These capabilities provided the ability to move many workers including administration and technical staff to working remotely from home.
- b. The PSAP used "PSAP in a box" to accomplish remote dispatching and used FirstNet route to duplicate the functions of the dispatch workstations. The "PSAP in a Box" provided the remote dispatchers the same capabilities at home as they had in the dispatch center. The flexibility of building remote locations allowed the PSAP to setup up the remote locations to replicate the physical and human interaction environment of the call center.
- c. The Planning and Testing for Phase 2 required an estimated 2 ½ weeks of from planning to exercising the equipment.

Phase 2 – Implement Remote Dispatching and Isolation Center

- 1. Goals.** Further disperse call-taking functions and create an Isolation Unit, both of which had not been previously undertaken by the city.
- 2. Implementation of Remote Testing.**
 - a. Implementation of remote call-taking began in late March
 - b. Function started with primarily administrative calls and then moved to dispatch calls.
 - c. Due to the vigorous testing, this step was accomplished relatively seamlessly.
- 3. Creation of an Isolation Unit.**
 - a. First Isolation Team was started at the end of March
 - b. Participation in the Isolation Unit was voluntary and included total isolation from outside visitors.
 - c. Various requirements were considered when determining the working location to be used. In addition to the unit functioning as a Dispatch Center, it also required basically full household functionality: including separate sleeping, cooking, laundry, and recreational facilities. The location that could best provide those features was the main comm center.
 - d. The initial time frame was targeted for 14 days but, was changed to 10 days in large part due to the separation from families.
 - e. The city has now had 3 rounds of isolation and there is a waiting list for participation in the isolation unit.

Phase 3 – Implementation of a 3rd Dispatch Center with Isolation Capabilities

- 1. Goals.** Establish an additional dispatch center.
- 2. Implementation.**
 - a. Created remote dispatch center in mid-April
 - b. Worked with a local hotel to determine best physical location for center within the hotel.
 - c. Deployed all the equipment and technology required for the Dispatch Center
 - d. Assembled team of volunteers
 - e. Brought the remote center live as to ensure full operational capability
 - f. Having established its operational capability, the remote center has since been dismantled.

Remote Training

- 1. Goal.** To keep moving forward with personnel training and the on-

United States and the world, as well as countries in Europe, the Middle East, Asia, the Caribbean, and South America.

For more information about our services and solutions, visit our website at:

www.winbourneconsulting.com

Look us up on LinkedIn

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/winbourne-consulting-llc?trk=biz-companies-cym>

boarding process with recently hired dispatchers. Remote training is a new program for the city and was implemented as part of Phase 2.

2. Implementation

- a. City is using Microsoft Team to implement
- b. Remote Training is utilized for orientation and introductory classes
- c. Where possible new employees used their equipment and current internet connections. If equipment was not available, then city provided necessary devices.
- d. Next step is to have CAD application training in a dedicated, classroom at a city facility where social distancing and other prevention measures can be practiced.

Lessons Learned

1. The big lesson is that nothing is impossible if we just work on it, we can make it work. Everything so far that has been a roadblock for us, we've been able to figure it out. And now to share that experience is what we're going to do next.
2. While plans look great on paper, testing and exercising was a key ingredient to success.
3. By splitting staffs between the 2 facilities, the center was able to enable social distancing quickly.
4. Created checklist of the myriad things needed during testing to successfully implement remote dispatching.
5. Change of this magnitude in a short time frame requires both the right technology and a significant amount of effort on the part of the support staff.
6. Communications teams were very flexible and accepted the changes that needed to be made in order to keep their services at the levels needed.
7. Ensuring that the technology and related components were available and ready was the most challenging aspect of the implementation.

Our thanks to Bob Bloom and Renee Gordon from the City of Alexandria for their insights and input.

Winbourne Happenings



Winbourne Consulting is working with the city of Springfield MA Police Department to modify the city's body camera implementation plan according to the city police department. The training curriculum, for example, is being adjusted with an emphasis on social distancing.

For the complete story, visit:

[**Despite Coronavirus, Springfield Police Body Camera Program Advances**](#)

Winbourne Senior Consultant Julie Heimkes collaborated with customer Suzanne Ladd from Seminole County, Florida in writing the lead story for the current issue of APCO's on-line PSC magazine. The article is titled "Making the Case for New Public Safety Communications Technology".

To read the article visit: https://www.pscmagazine-digital.com/pscs/0320_may_june_2020/MobilePagedReplica.action?pm=2&folio=12#pg12

Industry Events



In response to the COVID-19 virus and for the safety and welfare of everyone, APCO's Nexus event scheduled for May 21-22, 2020, in Washington, DC, has been rescheduled to May 18-19, 2021. The location will remain the same.



The LEIT Conference has been cancelled due to the COVID-19 Virus



#NENA2020 is moving to September!

After careful consideration, NENA has decided to reschedule the NENA 2020 Conference & Expo, previously planned for June 13-18 in Long Beach, CA. **The new dates are September 24-29 and Long Beach remains our host city.** With the well-being of attendees, exhibitors, sponsors, and volunteers as the number one priority, it is clear that rescheduling #NENA2020 is the only responsible course of action at this time.

We remain excited to host the 9-1-1 community later this year. A revised conference schedule and event details are now available at [nena.org/nena2020](https://www.nena.org/nena2020).

Please take a moment to [let us know](#) if you have any questions regarding the date change; your voice matters, and we care about your feedback. We look forward to seeing you in the fall. Until then, stay safe and healthy!

For additional info visit: <https://www.nena.org/nena2020>



APCO 2020 is the premier event for public safety communications officials, from frontline telecommunicators to comm center managers to public safety communications equipment and services vendors.

[Go to the APCO 2020 website.](#)



**Fire-Rescue
International**
IAFC's Conference & Expo

**August 19 - 21, 2020
Phoenix, AZ**

Fire-Rescue International is due to take place August 19-21. The IAFC team continues to plan for the show. We currently have no plans to postpone or cancel this event and are considering all options. This unprecedented situation is changing daily, so we remain watchful but also focused on delivering what is an extremely important event for the industry. Mindful of our duty of care, we are in regular communications with our hotel partners, as well as monitoring the recommendations of health advisory bodies. We will continue to keep this page up-to-date as information comes available.

For more info visit: <https://www.iafc.org/events/fri/general-info>

Articles of Interest



Essential Public Services Hinge On Secure Remote Access

On March 17, the Office of Management and Budget issued a mandate (M-20-16) instructing agencies to "maximize telework across the nation for the Federal workforce while maintaining mission-critical workforce needs."

Most state governments, if they had not acted already, soon followed these recommendations to implement work-from-home policies to curb the spread of the coronavirus. This has been an abrupt adjustment for all public-sector workers, but especially for those in state and local government -- where only 4% participated in telework prior to the coronavirus crisis, according to Pew Research.

Today, over three-quarters of Americans are living under state or local stay-at-home mandates or advisories, and the essential services provided across the public sector are being leaned on more heavily. It's certainly not business as usual, but business continuity remains an urgency.

To read the full article visit: <https://gcn.com/articles/2020/04/27/secure-remote-access.aspx>



Police Officials Emphasize Social Distancing to Keep Officers Healthy

Law enforcement officials from around the country emphasized the importance of strong social distancing policies in keeping law enforcement officers healthy and on duty amid the COVID-19 pandemic, during a March 27 webinar hosted by the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) and FirstNet, built with AT&T.

To ensure there are enough available troopers, New Jersey State Police officials took the available workforce and split it in half, said New Jersey State Police Col. Patrick Callahan. One half of that force will work over a 14-day period, while the other half is now on standby at home in case on-duty troopers are exposed to

coronavirus and must go into quarantine.

The full article can be viewed at:

<https://www.rrmediagroup.com/Features/FeaturesDetails/FID/986>



School Of Hard Knocks: 911 Operations In The COVID-19 Era

Written by Glenn Bischoff

Boxer and pop philosopher Mike Tyson once opined that “everyone has a plan—until they get punched in the mouth.” Without question, the COVID-19 pandemic has punched the public-safety/emergency-response community squarely in the mouth—and hard. But the community’s resiliency and creativity is enabling it to fight back equally hard, and the lessons being learned through the experience will better prepare public-safety and emergency-response agencies for the future.

To read the complete article visit: <https://urgentcomm.com/2020/04/23/school-of-hard-knocks-911-operations-in-the-covid-19-era/>



COVID-19 Stay-At-Home And Traveler Quarantine Orders Pose Enforcement Challenges For Local Officials

As city and county leaders battle the public health crisis with COVID-19, they are also facing unprecedented enforcement challenges that could have ripple effects on their local communities and economies far beyond the current pandemic. The key to navigating these issues for many local officials is a combination of awareness and communication—knowing the fast-moving issues that are evolving elsewhere in the country and communicating clearly and often in a way that helps the public make sense of the new rules.

To read the full article visit:

<https://www.americancityandcounty.com/2020/04/22/covid-19-stay-at-home-and-traveler-quarantine-orders-pose-enforcement-challenges-for-local-officials/>

**We Are Interested in Your Thoughts on the Above Topics.
To share them with us, please:**

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