



## January 2022

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### Dealing With the On-Going Effects of the COVID Pandemic

In March of 2019, the COVID 19 pandemic was declared a National Emergency. The effect it had on our emergency communication centers (ECC) was something no one had ever experienced before, and centers quickly activated their Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP). Most centers had a pandemic plan that was planned during the 2009 H1N1 situation and eleven years later when COVID 19 hit, it remained a truly relevant plan. However, the biggest change was the new technology that would allow centers to operate differently than they had in 2009. Response plans were modified to allow phone and or online reports in lieu of an officer physically responding. Centers split their operations, opening their backup dispatch center, and staffing both simultaneously. Centers were prepared for social distancing by placing plex-glass dividers between the consoles and checking staff for signs of COVID prior to entering an ECC. Offices were changed into sleeping rooms training rooms became functioning centers, allowing the distancing of staff and finally, call takers were set up to answer 911 calls from their homes.

**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.**

Now, nearly two years later, the effects of COVID are still being felt by the ECCs. We checked in with seven of our customers to find out if any of the initial changes made by their center to deal with COVID are still in place, and have any of them become a permanent change?

- Most of the centers have increased their sanitizing requirements and many of them have hired professional resources to decontaminate the center on a regular basis.
- All the centers that have fully functional back up centers and split their staff, are continuing with this practice. Some are researching the feasibility of this becoming a permanent situation, while others have made this a permanent operation.
- One center set up dispatch operations in a single office continues to use that for staff that have had direct exposure but no symptoms, to continue to work isolated from the rest of the staff.
- Several of the centers and their agencies have permanently changed response requirements allowing officers to call complainant to obtain report information instead of responding to the location of the incident. Some agencies have implemented online reports for past action incidents.
- Every center is dealing with staffing shortages. The shortages are the result of:
  - The result of training academies being shut down during the heart of the pandemic
  - Losing staff due to their school age children having to take online learning from home
  - Staff testing positive for COVID
- All the centers are following local and or state mandates for the use of masks.
- None of the seven centers had mandatory vaccination requirements for their

staff. All of them are following federal guidelines for essential workers and have created additional guidelines including:

- If a staff member's direct family member gets COVID and they are not vaccinated, they are required to quarantine at home for a certain number of days. They may return if no symptoms or receive a negative COVID test.
- If a staff member's direct family member gets COVID and they have no symptoms, they are placed in an isolated work area with the ability to process calls.
- During the heart of the pandemic, unvaccinated staff were required to take weekly COVID tests (this has since been rescinded).
- Fully vaccinated staff that contract the virus are granted emergency leave. Unvaccinated employees must use accrued annual or sick leave.
- Incentives are offered to employees become vaccinated, including 32 hours of additional vacation time.

Everyone thought the COVID pandemic would be a short-term event, but it continues, fortunately, not to the degree that it was during the heart of the pandemic. Our customers, along with the Emergency Communication Centers across the U.S., continue to show how resilient, ardent, and dedicated they are in their efforts to protect their first responders and the citizens they serve.

We would like to thank the following ECCs for their input to this article:

Alexandria-VA, Chesapeake-VA, CONFIRE-CA, Iredell County-NC, Port Authority Police-VA, Stafford County-VA, and Virginia Beach-VA.

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## Winbourne Happenings



Photo Courtesy of An Giang Online

**Winbourne Consulting was part of a recent conference of a select group of leading US companies** (Motorola, Dell, Honeywell, EY, and Qualcomm) to join the US Commercial Service first business development engagement with the government of An Giang Province, Vietnam. In a presentation of the USTDA funding and opportunities, **Winbourne was recognized as a successful example of implementing IT projects in Vietnam and the Southeast Asia region.** We are currently providing consulting services to Ho Chi Minh City in their implementation of a Smart Cities System.

## Winbourne Areas of Expertise:

- 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



**Winbourne Consulting attended the NENA Standards & Best Practices Conference in San Diego January 17-20.** The focus of the conference was NG911 deployment. The various seminars covered a wide variety of topics and formats. There were informative discussions on: "lessons learned" led by agencies during on-going deployments; tutorial type sessions for briefing PSAP personnel on how to prepare the GIS, the crucial database engine for the geospatial routing features of NG911; how data that is more readily deliverable to NG911 PSAPS can augment situational awareness for a more effective first response. The discussion leaders had a common theme urging attendees to join and participate in NENA working groups as it is the optimal and most collaborative way to not only support NG911 migrations across the nation, but also learn more about NG911 so local PSAP personnel can be well prepared to adapt any operational processes associated with call taking and dispatching calls delivered on an IP based system. Please reach out to NENA to explore participating in any of the multiple working groups that help establish NG911 Standards and Best Practices.

For additional information on participating visit:  
<https://www.nena.org/page/VolunteerInterest>

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## Public Safety News

### A Robot In Every Squad Car

**Partnering with a computer geek friend, Minnesota officer Shawn Mahaney has worked to develop a robot that would be affordable to every agency**

**Ron LaPedis**

You roll up on a welfare check and find a door that's obviously been kicked in. You call out and don't get any answer. Do you enter, send in a K-9 or wait it out?

The story of [Tactical R/C](#) began when Minnesota officer Shawn Mahaney faced this all-too-common law enforcement scenario.

Officer Mahaney told Police1, "A K-9 was requested but with officers unable to contact and confirm the whereabouts of the tenant, the K-9 was not able to deploy out of concern an innocent person was still inside the apartment and at risk of being bitten inadvertently." Mahaney's agency had a robot, but it was back at the station and would take too long to get it into place.

The 4Sight is stripped to the essentials of a vehicle body, with four huge wheels, lights, battery, a mounting clip and a remote control.

After this incident, Mahaney got permission from his CO to evaluate putting robots in every patrol vehicle. Unfortunately, the "robot back at the station" cost \$15,000 and there was no way they could afford to put one in every car – so he decided it was time to make his own.

To read the complete article visit: <https://www.police1.com/swat/articles/a-robot-in-every-squad-car->

Our clients include city, county, state, and federal agencies located throughout the United States and the world, as well as countries in Europe, the Middle East, Asia, the Caribbean, and South America.

## Industry Events

### 9-1-1 GOES TO WASHINGTON

February 13-16, 2022 | The Ritz-Carlton Pentagon City

**911 Goes to Washington** brings together hundreds of 911 professionals from around the country with policy leaders in our nation's capital to explore and discuss today's most pressing 911 and emergency communications issues. 911 Goes to Washington is the only event where you can learn about the policy challenges facing public safety and take immediate action to address them through dialog with your elected and appointed officials.

For additional information, visit: <https://www.nena.org/page/gtw>



**The IACP Technology Conference** is the premier professional event dedicated to discussing technology in law enforcement. Attendees should expect quality training, professional development, and networking covering a broad array of new and emerging technologies.

For additional information, visit: <https://www.theiacp.org/tech-conference>

## Articles of Interest



### **The Federal Communications Commission Is Looking For Information On How To Prevent Unwanted Robocalls From Reaching Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs)**

FCC first adopted a PSAP Do-Not-Call registry in 2012 to address auto dialer-initiated calls, which were tying up public safety lines, diverting critical responder resources from emergency services and impeding the public's access to emergency lines

Now the commission is proposing that "voice service providers be required to block autodialed calls made to PSAP telephone numbers on the PSAP Do-Not-Call registry," according to a document recently posted in the Federal Register. To inform that decision, the FCC wants updated information about how the issue for PSAPs has changed since 2012.

To read the complete article visit: <https://gcn.com/public-safety/2021/12/protecting-911-from-unwanted-robocalls/316495/>



### **Report Finds Emergency Responders Need More Tools, Resources to Address Workload**

Rave Mobile Safety released its 2022 Public Safety Trends Survey results. The findings show that emergency responders are experiencing increased challenges and workloads at their jobs and are in need of better tools and resources to improve response efforts.

While the public health and safety needs of communities are continually evolving, new COVID-19 variants, an increase in acts of violence, and the public perception of law enforcement and first responders are the latest challenges public-safety professionals are managing while working to protect their communities. Resources such as budget and staffing are not keeping pace, and new strategies are needed to fill the gap.

To read the complete article visit:

<https://www.rrmediagroup.com/News/NewsDetails/NewsID/21285>



### **FirstNet Exceeds 3 Million Connections and 19,500 Agencies, AT&T Reports**

FirstNet added more than 1 million connections last year, providing more than 3 million connections to more than 19,500 public-safety agencies at the end of 2021, according to figures reported this morning by AT&T, the contractor responsible for building and maintaining the nationwide public-safety broadband network (NPSBN).

AT&T officials barely mentioned FirstNet during today's quarterly conference call highlighting the carrier giant's performance during the final quarter of 2021, but a company spokesperson provided the updated FirstNet adoption figures. These numbers mean that FirstNet added about 1.1 million connections and 4,500 subscribing agencies during 2021, based on figures released last year at this time.

To read the complete article visit: <https://urgentcomm.com/2022/01/26/firstnet-exceeds-3-million-connections-and-19500-agencies-att-reports/>

### **Data Protection, Cloud Advancement and Containerization: 2022 State And Local Priorities**

Written by Mike Wiseman / American City & County

Between the lasting implications of the pandemic, continual shifts in work practices and the ever-present threat of a ransomware attack, state and local governments have persevered through another year of adapting to meet citizen needs and continue to deliver on the mission. This year, we've seen a push toward significant transformation of our technology systems, remote working capabilities and data infrastructures—showing state and local governments' determination to push forward for more robust citizen service delivery.

As we enter 2022, some of the same trends will remain at the center stage, including cybersecurity and artificial intelligence (AI), as both the private and public sectors continue to emphasize data protection. However, a new focus will be on modernization, including moving systems to the cloud, utilizing containerization and understanding how to sustain technology systems for years

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[www.winbourneconsulting.com](http://www.winbourneconsulting.com)

to come. These factors combined will lead to resilient systems that will continue to drive innovation for years to come.

To read the complete article visit: <https://urgentcomm.com/2022/01/20/data-protection-cloud-advancement-and-containerization-2022-state-and-local-priorities/>



## **Public Safety Organizations Will Face New, Ongoing Challenges In The New Year**

Following a turbulent 2020 that was marked by protests over police killings, this year brought with it many challenges for those in public safety—from local policy changes to confronting the ongoing pandemic and a national reckoning over the way agencies should operate. Next year promises to bring about more changes.

"The last few years have been some of the most challenging for public safety in recent memory," wrote Scott Crouch, co-founder and CEO of Mark43, a technology firm that works with government agencies, in an introduction to the organization's new report, "2022 Public Safety Trends Report Public." In myriad ways, agencies "have had to contend with the arrival of COVID-19, nationwide protests and public unrest that followed the murder of George Floyd, a historic rise in violent crime, and a general decline in goodwill toward first responders."

The role of law enforcement will continue to be argued in the court of public opinion next year. And as that debate happens, with task forces pushing to implement their policy recommendations, "Public safety agencies must be proactive in assessing their role in community interactions that have historically served as the epicenter for police-community tensions or risk having the changes imposed upon them."

To read the complete article visit:

<https://www.americancityandcounty.com/2021/12/15/public-safety-organizations-will-face-new-ongoing-challenges-in-the-new-year/>

**Look us up on  
LinkedIn**

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

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**We Are Interested in Your Thoughts on the Above Topics.**

**To share them with us, please:**

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**or**

**Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/winbournellc>

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