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GEORGIA STATE PATROL EMBRACES CUTTING-EDGE COMMUNICATION: A SEAMLESS SHIFT FROM LMR TO MCPTT

L3Harris Devices Enhance Statewide Communication Reliability

Georgia State Patrol, a key public safety agency, has revolutionized its emergency communication strategy by adopting Southern Linc's LTE system with Mission-Critical Push-To-Talk (MCPTT). This transition from the traditional VHF land mobile radio (LMR) system marks a significant step toward more reliable voice communications during critical situations. In a recent Urgent Communications article by Donny Jackson, titled "Georgia State Patrol Turns to Southern Linc LTE System for Mission-Critical Voice Comms," Captain Brian Screws, Chief Information Officer for the Georgia State Patrol, emphasized that Southern Linc's LTE network has proven more dependable than their previous VHF system. "We started realizing that, more and more, we are having to rely on Southern Linc's LTE network because it is more reliable than our VHF network." The agency now uses L3Harris' XL series devices, which combine P25 radios with 3GPP-standard public-safety LTE capabilities, providing a robust and versatile communication solution.

CHALLENGES DURING EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS

In the past 18 months, the Georgia State Patrol experienced numerous incidents — snowstorms, hurricanes and tornadoes — that highlighted the limitations of their VHF system. Captain Screws noted that during these critical times, state-owned assets often failed, leaving responders stranded and communication impaired. This prompted an urgent need for a more reliable alternative.

SEAMLESS INTEGRATION OF CONVERGED COMMUNICATIONS

The agency turned to Southern Linc's MCPTT service, leveraging an impressive LTE network that outperformed their existing VHF system. This transition was facilitated by L3Harris' XL series devices, which support both P25 and 3GPP-standard public safety LTE communications. Captain Screws explained, "When we saw the marriage of both worlds — connecting XL series radios with LTE and broadband — **we found our silver bullet.**"

THE TRANSITION TO MCPTT

The Georgia State Patrol began using Southern Linc's MCPTT as its primary voice communication method, enabling troopers and dispatchers to operate seamlessly across the state. The XL series devices allowed users to revert to previous protocols if necessary, presenting a versatile solution tailored to evolving communication needs.



KEY BENEFITS

- > **Enhanced Communication:**
Provides broadband for sharing high-bandwidth videos, images and data in the field.
- > **Interoperability:**
Provides seamless communication for agencies and jurisdictions to effectively coordinate and share information.
- > **Extended Coverage:**
MCPTT solutions provide extensive coverage and enable agencies to operate beyond their existing land mobile radio (LMR) footprint.
- > **Cost Efficiency:**
Utilize existing networks and platforms and transition from a capital expenditure model to an operational expenditure model, reducing costs and streamlining communication.

Through the integration of Southern Linc’s LTE network and L3Harris devices, the Georgia State Patrol achieved significant advancements in communication reliability and technology access. The agency now benefits from efficient and cost-effective voice communications, fostering confidence among personnel during emergency situations.

THE FUTURE OF CONVERGENCE

While the legacy VHF system remains in place for the time being, Captain Screws acknowledged the pressing inquiries from the Office of Planning and Budget regarding the long-term viability of maintaining old LMR towers. With the success of the MCPTT solution in place, discussions about fully transitioning to the Southern Linc LTE option are foreseeable in the near future.

The Georgia State Patrol’s successful move from LMR to LTE is a testament to the resiliency and transformative potential of integrating modern communication technologies in public safety environments. Southern Linc and the Georgia State Patrol serve as a model for other agencies looking to enhance their operational capabilities from LMR-to-LTE convergence.

Jackson, D. (2024, August 9). Georgia State Patrol turns to Southern Linc LTE system for mission-critical voice comms. Urgent Communications.



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Captain Brian Screws

Chief Information Officer
Georgia State Patrol