Case Study: Hamilton County, Indiana

Hamilton County, Indiana has an area of approximately 400 square miles with a population of 300,000 that grows to almost to 500,000 during various entertainment and sporting events. The County shares the Motorola ASTRO 7.16 trunked system with city of Indianapolis, (Marion County) and Madison County. The City of Indianapolis installed the main system in the early 1990's with various updates over the years. In 2014, Hamilton County joined the city of Indianapolis to share their master site. Madison County joined the city of Indianapolis system in 2015 and with that brings the system to 29 sites and 71 channels for their 31,000 subscribers from state, federal, local and partner agencies.

As Hamilton County was "going live" with their newly upgraded radio system, consultants encouraged them to evaluate GenWatch3 for sophisticated reporting and overall system health monitoring. When seeing the data granularity compared to the other accessible reports there was no doubt about procurement.

Upon implementing the GenWatch3 software, being able to troubleshoot system events was impressive. For example, Hamilton County had been experiencing difficulties with their fire-station alerting – an exorbitant amount of time was spent reviewing thousands of lines (15,000) of log files to determine if a call alert had been properly sent and received. With the GenWatch3 reporting suite, this data was available in minutes; saving personnel many hours of lost productivity.

The granularity of these reports became a key factor in the operation and optimization of the radio network. James Miller, Hamilton County Radio Network Manager elaborates "Overall the ability to drive down into the nitty gritty details is really beneficial. It gives me the ability to back up my recommendations with physical data. It helped me dissect our system and enlighten some pain points on our system." In addition, Genesis can identify individual user historical data on a specific talk group, helping to troubleshoot user error versus system error.

The GeneWatch3 software has also verified management concerns such as subscribers' individual radio outages.

On May 25, 2018 at 9:06 AM, Noblesville Police Department (in Hamilton County) responded to a school shooting at Noblesville West Middle School. "We had a lot of people on the system, and a lot of people in places they shouldn't have been within the radio system", says James. "We fully staffed the (dispatch) center to help cover talk groups or field calls that were coming in." To put things in perspective, this was going on the same weekend as the Indy500. Because the system data through the GenWatch3 solution is archived, James was able to run canned Call Activity reports over the duration of the Noblesville West event. "GenWatch3 software helped me dissect this event and allowed me to provide an after-action report on how our radio network performed.," explains James. He found that during the height of the incident, their system was at 45% utilization and the airtime peaked and remained so until late in the day. As a result of the reporting available in GenWatch3, James was able to see public works users tuning into the countywide interop tactical channels which were being utilized by SWAT teams. Hamilton County has several school districts on their network and during this event, one of the school's transportation department was the 13th busiest talkgroup that day. "We were one talk path away from busying out the radio system" he continued.

All the GenWatch3 radio information available resulted in positive changes in the way users communicate on the system. "Going forward as we have more and more large incidents, we will continue to monitor and utilize the GenWatch3 software to critique and improve our services", James said. Hamilton County leveraged their insight on system performance because of this incident on May 25th and made recommendations for users on how to communicate on a public safety system during large events. Today, the County acts as a showcase radio system in the central Indiana region for Genesis and Motorola—both of whom bring in customers to visit and observe.