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## Ready for action

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Technology keeps emergency responders connected in the field

As the agency that provides the county-wide phone systems for 911 calls, the computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system, network connections among radio systems and geographic information system (GIS) services for public safety agencies, the El Paso County, Texas, Enhanced 911 Emergency Communications District has to stay current on technology and ensure its reliability. Early last year, the district consolidated the county-wide public safety communications network to accommodate a new CAD system, but it soon found that the system would not work with the network connecting fleet vehicles.

The district needed a communications platform for its vehicles that could support the new CAD system and replace numerous old vehicle modems. At the same time, district managers wanted to provide high-speed connectivity for all devices in and around the public safety vehicles.

After considering several options, the district started a one-year trial of the onBoard Mobile Gateway from New Westminster, BC, Canada-based In Motion Technology on 10 vehicles. Meanwhile, the El Paso County Sheriff Department deployed the technology on more than 30 vehicles and tested connectivity and performance with the new CAD system. ♦We like to demo any public safety equipment for extended periods to ensure that the maximum amount of issues are identified and corrected prior to go-live, ♦ says JC Ocasio, El Paso County's network planning manager.

The Gateway kept vehicles continuously connected to the county's wireless network, so patrol cars were always connected to the CAD and had a secure connection for e-ticketing apparatus, automatic license plate recognition devices, and the county's mobile two finger fast ID system. With the help of a \$1.4 million federal grant from the Urban Areas Security Initiative Program, the district and partners acquired 530 units and now is installing the technology throughout the rest of the fleet. ♦We are very impressed with the capabilities and flexibility of the Gateway to meet the rigorous 911 public safety requirements, ♦ says Peter Cooper, chief technology officer for El Paso County and El Paso.

**Project:** County-wide vehicle communications platform

**Jurisdiction:** El Paso County, Texas

**Agencies involved:** El Paso County Enhanced 911 Emergency Communications District, El Paso County, City of El Paso, El Paso Police, El Paso Fire and El Paso Office of Emergency Management

**Vendor:** New Westminster, BC, Canada-based [In Motion Technologies Inc.](#)

**Date completed:** May 2011

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