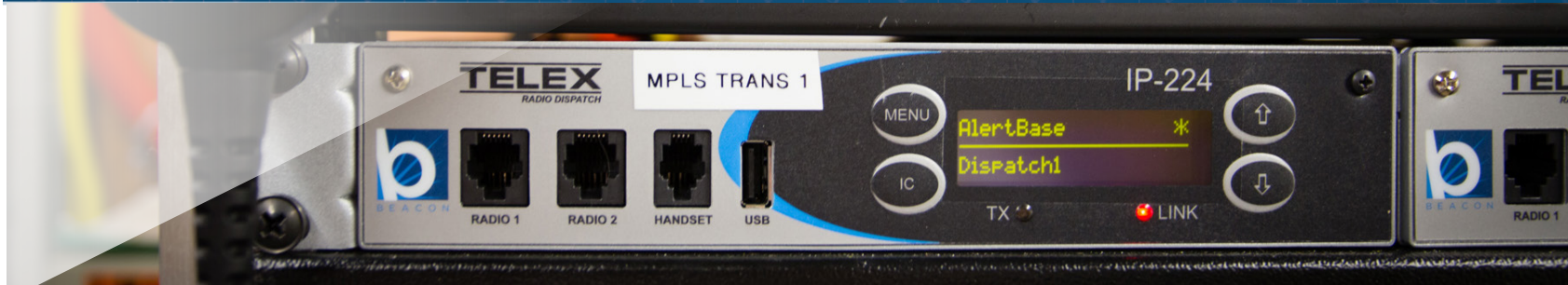




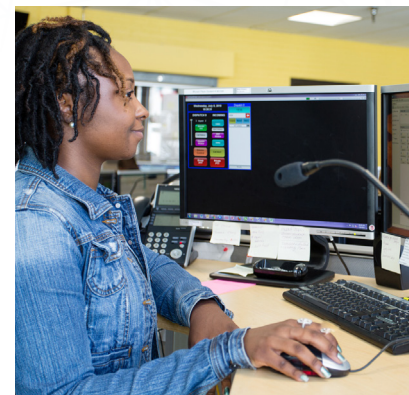
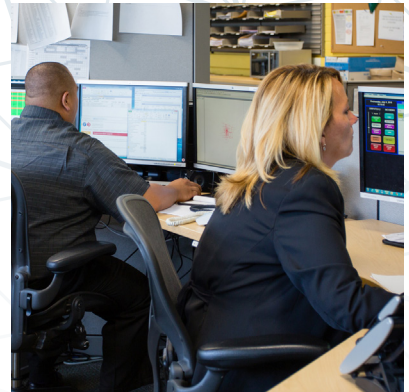
MINNEAPOLIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS SELECT TELEX RADIO DISPATCH SOFTWARE

- Customized Telex dispatch solution mirrors real-world needs of end-users
- New C-Soft V7 software developed in cooperation with Minneapolis Public School Transportation Department
- Additional customers have already opted for the industry's most flexible and scalable software-based dispatch platform



“...THE SOLUTION GIVES YOU INCREDIBLE FLEXIBILITY AND CAN BE SCALED TO EXACTLY THE NEEDS ON SITE.”

The Minneapolis Public Schools Transportation Department is responsible for 500 buses on the road each school day. When developing its latest dispatch software, C-Soft V7, Telex Radio Dispatch worked closely with the department's management and dispatchers to develop the next generation of the industry's most flexible and scalable software-based dispatch platform. User-friendly operation—as well as server and distributed configurations—make the C-Soft V7 ideal for a wide range of customers and vertical markets. The effectiveness of the new platform has led to it being adopted by facilities in the nearby suburbs of Bloomington and Rosemount.





To manage a daily load of around 25,000 pupils, the Minneapolis Public School Transportation Department had been relying on an outdated radio system from the 1990s. “Over the years, the dispatchers at the department had become accustomed to operating in a specific way based on the capabilities of the existing system,” says Mark Greenlee, Vice-President of Sales at Professional Wireless Communications. “Instead of traditional dispatch where the transmissions are one-to-many, their operation was primarily based on one-to-one calling.” Calls from a bus in the form of alerts would be placed in a queue with dispatchers answering calls in chronological order in order to allow for privacy and avoid distracting other bus drivers. In emergency cases, group calls could be made on a different channel without queuing.

FINDING A NEW DISPATCH SYSTEM

“When the time came to replace the system, the Minneapolis Public School Transportation Department asked us to seek out a manufacturer with a product that provided some of these same features,” Greenlee continues. “The old manufacturer was no longer in business and there was not an ‘off the shelf’ solution similar to the system the department used.” With no suitable product available, Greenlee approached Telex. “Telex had started developing the new C-Soft V7 dispatch software and was very keen to speak to the end-users at the department as part of that process, as C-Soft fits extremely well in this kind of application.” After the first presentation to the department, feedback was highly positive, as Greenlee recalls: “The department really liked what it saw; it thought the solution would be a good fit and started offering further suggestions for fine-tuning straight away.”

Only a few months later, an updated Alpha version was on-site for test runs. Telex provided a further updated version with extended features in June, 2014. By August, 2014, new radios were installed in all 500 buses and 10 dispatch positions were equipped with the Beta version of the Telex C-Soft V7 dispatch software. Development continued, and Telex engineers traveled from Nebraska to interview dispatchers in order to incorporate their feedback into what became the final version of C-Soft V7.

RUNNING SMOOTHLY FROM THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

When the new school year started, the final version was in place and running smoothly. “The new solution was put to the test during the first week of school,” says Greenlee. “No test run can portray real life. So with seven people handling over 5,000 calls in one week, the software really showed what it was capable of.” And according to Greenlee the results

were fantastic. “The team insisted that the new system was everything and better than the old one. The new C-Soft expands the platform’s capabilities by adding a range of new features, such as the support for Kenwood NEXEDGE® trunking and per-line call playback right from the dispatcher’s position.” One key feature is the queue window, which allows dispatchers to see and update the status of incoming radio calls. “For Minneapolis this means that the dispatch channels are centralized between all ten positions,” Greenlee continues. “This way the team can share the load while colors indicate which calls are in process and which position is handling each specific call.” At the same time, dispatchers can alert bus drivers that they have a message, while bus drivers can ping-in and request assistance. “Our hats off to the folks at Telex who saw the level of urgency and were able to deploy a product that worked – and solved the problem in what I would call a simply unrealistic time frame.”

EXPANSION OF SYSTEM TO INCORPORATE SAFETY & SECURITY

With the dispatch system running smoothly, Greenlee and his team decided to take the system one step further. In cooperation with the Department of Emergency Management and Safety & Security, Professional Wireless Communications is connecting the dispatch system to district school facilities in a pilot program. In the future, dispatchers will be able to transmit to the local radio system at the respective school, and therefore talk directly to safety and security staff or emergency management teams. “Through Telex, the cost of unifying communications in the district are a fraction of what they would be if one were to replace all radios,” says Greenlee. “Even more, the solution gives you incredible flexibility and can be scaled to exactly the needs on site.”

CUSTOMIZATION FOR DIFFERENT INSTALLATIONS

At the same time as the Minneapolis Public School Transportation Department, Bloomington Public Schools was also looking for a new dispatch system. “While some requirements in Bloomington were different, we were able to customize the exact same tool to also meet Bloomington’s specific needs,” Greenlee explains. Based on flexibility and scalability of the C-Soft V7 software and after seeing the different customizations in Minneapolis and Bloomington, District 196 in Rosemount, MN also opted for the new Telex software. “Again, their needs were a little different from the ones before, but we were able to customize the product to meet the needs of this customer. That’s the great thing with C-Soft V7: the customers are ultimately in control of which feature sets they want to have and how these will work for them.”

A communications technology leader since 1936, TELEX designs and manufactures world-class aviation headset, intercom, radio dispatch, and wireless products that are trusted in mission-critical applications across the globe.

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