



SARA Helps to Improve Safety and Security at Washington County Courthouse



About

Washington County, Pennsylvania is a historical county formed in 1781 serving a population of 208,000 with a land area of 864 square miles. Washington County's main campus and judicial facility has six buildings and employs approximately 1,200 individuals.

Opportunity

Judicial facilities throughout the country are faced with the challenge of keeping their employees safe and secure. Many states and counties have turned to technology to help reduce the risk they face on a daily basis. Washington County recognized this problem, and began looking for an improved and more reliable means of securing the judges within the courthouse building. At the same time, the county wanted to leverage the existing Cisco IP Communication infrastructure with integrated applications across the campus complex.

Washington County's current technology was a hardwired panel based alerts system that was aging and not functioning to the level necessary to provide increased security to the judges. Instead of simply moving the main control panel to another location, which was required due to renovations, the county IT department chose to look at the issue strategically rather than tactically.

The IT department wanted their judges to feel safe in their offices, in the courtroom, and in the parking garages. The judges needed to be confident that if and/or when an incident occurred, that a call for help would be heard and responded to immediately. The IT staff also looked for a system that could leverage their VoIP infrastructure, and that could be expanded over time to include other types of awareness alerting functions.

Solution

Panic buttons were installed in fixed locations including judges' chambers, courtrooms, the jail, adult and juvenile waiting areas, and probation and mental health offices. Wireless panic buttons were also given to the judges to be taken with them as they walked throughout the government campus and parking garages. Judges faced with a threatening situation are able to press a single button, and be assured that someone will respond as quickly as possible.

Status Solutions worked in conjunction with Cisco Systems technology partner IPcelerate™ to deliver an alert and notification solution to Washington County. A direct link was created between the wireless panic buttons, the IPsession™ appliance provided by IPcelerate™, the Situational Awareness and Response Assistant (SARA) software provided by Status Solutions, and the Cisco IP phone system. When a fixed or wireless panic button is activated, then a voice or text alert will be sent directly to the sheriff's office or other pre-defined security location. Software was also installed on phones (which in this case are Cisco IP phones) throughout the campus to enable a panic soft key, which could be pressed if a fixed or wireless panic button was not available. Again, the emergency event triggers an alert that is sent directly to the sheriff's office for an immediate response.



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Summary

The challenge Washington County was facing was three-fold: the safety of its judges, overall facility security and an outdated security panel system. Rather than simply moving or upgrading the existing system, they chose to leverage their current infrastructure and implement a solution that would improve the level of safety and security the county could provide for all of its employees.

The Partnership

Due to Homeland Security mandates and increased security efforts, Washington County plans to expand the footprint Status Solutions has made across their campus. There are plans to expand the alerting capabilities to include video. The goal is to integrate with the video surveillance system, so that the SARA system could be used as a notification device to activate video recording based on an alert event. Fixed or wireless panic buttons, as well as other devices such as flame, moisture or temperature sensor applications could trigger alerts.

Washington County has a health center about 2.5 miles from the main judicial campus. The senior housing community employs approximately 400 individuals. Washington County has plans to extend the alerting and notification system to the health center to address life safety issues and environmental concerns. The technology will be applied in much the same way, as certain events occur, alerts will be sent via voice or text to the party who can best address the issue.



About ResponseTECH and Status Solutions

ResponseTECH is a system integrator and provider of vertical market solutions to the senior housing, education and government markets. ResponseTECH is an Authorized distributor for Status Solutions and the SARA system which provides heightened awareness to these markets and their distinct requirements.

Status Solutions accomplishes this through an established and expanding library of integrations to existing systems, as well as its own monitoring and alerting capabilities. Call ResponseTECH to schedule a demo or to get more information on SARA and other senior housing solutions we provide!

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