

Harris County Mobile Command Unit

Commercial Electronics' Customer Wins National Call Center Award

The Harris County Sheriff's Office Mobile Command Unit was awarded the 2009 "911 Outstanding Call Center Award" by the E9-1-1 Institute and National Emergency Number Association (NENA). The specialized unit was recognized for its excellence in providing and maintaining emergency communications during Hurricane Ike.

Throughout the catastrophic hurricane the dedicated Sheriff's Office personnel assigned to the unit began what some characterized as a grueling odyssey in their efforts to meet the needs of the local emergency agencies hardest hit by the storm. The Mobile Command Unit successively provided 9-1-1 service to the cities of Houston, Pasadena and Seabrook. The Seabrook deployment lasted a record 72 days due to extensive damage to its 9-1-1 communications center.

Harris County Sheriff's Office is a proven national leader in mobile command platforms, staging and deployment strategies, training regimens, and in the implementation of various high-tech communication technologies. "We have always tried to stay one step ahead," says Sergeant John L. Byrd, Mobile Command Post Operations. "In 2002, we selected HigherGround as the call recording vendor for our first unit. There weren't many vendors that could meet the technology requirements we requested. Now we have expanded our mobile operations to four mobile command vehicles including one that has been designed to serve as a 10-position back-up PSAP. Each of the units has HigherGround's Capture911 software installed." The mobile units are deployed a couple of times per week on average for severe weather, man hunts, lost children searches, man-made disasters, high profile sporting events and on occasion to support NASA's Johnson Space Center.

"The customer support has been tremendous," says Byrd, referring to the tech services received from HigherGround's Texas-based authorized reseller, Commercial Electronics Corporation. "Also, the Capture911 product is very user-friendly and easy to learn. That is important - especially for our mobile units."

"It is an honor for our organizations to once again recognize the everyday heroes of 9-1-1," said Gregory L. Rohde, Executive Director of the E9-1-1 Institute. "The Mobile Command Unit's consummate professionalism in handling a critical situation proves there is no such thing as an ordinary day for the thousands of men and women who are the vital link between the citizens of the communities they serve and the help they desperately need."

The E9-1-1 Institute and the National Emergency Number Association (NENA) are non-profit organizations nationally recognized for their promotion of public education on 9-1-1 and emergency communications issues.