MOTOROLA

University of St. Francis Says MOTOTRBO™ Radios Are "Best Practice for Campus Safety"

Keeping students, faculty, and staff safe wherever they are on campus is a priority. However, the Safety and Security Department at the University of St. Francis in Joliet, Illinois was coping with an aging, unreliable two-way communications system, making their jobs more challenging. With their new MOTOTRBO digital two-way portable radios, Safety and Security can now communicate throughout the campus – even throughout the underground service tunnels and all the way out to the new downtown satellite campus located a mile away.

"When we put the digital system in, we were shocked at the clarity we were getting, even two miles away. It's almost like you're standing right next to the person."

- Tom Uraski, Director of Security, University of St. Francis

Situation: Inadequate communications throughout the campus

Founded in 1920, the University of St. Francis (USF) in Joliet, Illinois is a private, nonprofit university located on three square blocks of a residential neighborhood. The school's 2,000 students and 93 full-time faculty split their time between the Twin Oaks campus about four miles away and a new satellite campus for the Arts & Design program, located in the historic Rialto Theater building about a mile away in downtown Joliet.

Like many small universities, the USF Safety and Security Department had not always been a major presence, but September 11, 2001 changed that. Today, the security force is comprised of 15 officers led by Director Tom Uraski, who holds security drills to keep his team sharp and ready to respond. According to President Michael Vinciguerra, "Our Safety and Security Department regularly undergoes training, including updates for best practices for campus safety."

However, in spite of the university's efforts to maintain top-notch campus security processes, its aging two-way analog radio system was hindering those best practices.

Products

- MOTOTRBO XPR™ 6500 portable radios
- MOTOTRBO XPR™ 8300 repeater

Benefits

- Reliable communications between main and satellite campus
- Seamless coverage across campus, inside buildings, and into tunnels
- Enables university to cost effectively migrate to digital radios

"Keeping costs down and having our radios continue working through long shifts and in adverse weather conditions is critical," "We chose MOTOTRBO because of the IP57 submersible rating, which means less downtime and fewer repairs. In addition, the IMPRES Batteries give us nearly double the talk time."

- Bob Tenuta, CFO, University of St. Francis.

Poor audio, interference, and dead spots

"When I first came to USF, the first thing I wanted to do was switch out the communications system," says Uraski. "It was an old system with different types of radios. The audio was terrible, there was constant interference and chatter on the channel, and getting a signal through buildings that were built in the pre-World War II years was really difficult."

In addition, Uraski knew that the existing repeater, a small desktop unit, would be inadequate for extending communications to the new satellite campus downtown. Having experienced the quality of Motorola radios at his former position as director of security for another university, Uraski proposed switching out the existing system with new technology.

"When I talked about it with Larry Burich, Executive Director of Operations and Facilities Management and our CFO, Bob Tenuta, they took a visionary approach and recommended that we take it a step further," says Uraski. "They wanted to use this opportunity to start migrating our radios to digital."

Solution: MOTOTRBO digital portable radios

Uraski contacted Dennis Burda at Miner Electronics, a local Motorola channel partner, to discuss the situation and develop a proposal. After learning about the situation, Burda recommended MOTOTRBO digital portable radios.

The MOTOTRBO radios would provide reliable coverage between the university's main and downtown campus, ensure more crisp audio throughout the coverage area and help eliminate dead spots within the campus buildings and the underground service tunnels. The enhanced call management capability of MOTOTRBO would enable the Safety and Security team to talk privately one-to-one or facilitate a group call for real-time emergency alert notification to the entire team. Text messaging would also allow discrete messages to be exchanged either through pre-programmed emergency notifications or short, free-form messages. And thanks to the radios' digital technology, the static, noise, and interference of the old analog radios would be a thing of the past.

Last but not least, the radios would help the university facilitate a smooth and cost-effective transition to digital communications. MOTOTRBO radios are dual-mode, which means that a simple switch allows them to easily toggle back and forth between analog and digital. The dual-band capability of the MOTOTRBO radios would allow the university to purchase MOTOTRBO radios for the Safety and Security Department first and then convert maintenance and other campus employees, who still use the analog radios, to digital technology as budget became available.

The Motorola channel partner gave Uraski's team a set of demo radios to test effectiveness. "The first time we tried them, the clarity of the MOTOTRBOs blew me away," Uraski says. "I've never heard two-way radios sound this good before."

The channel partner mounted a repeater on top of the tallest building on the main campus and one on top of the Rialto building downtown. This has not only enabled the Safety and Security Department to easily communicate between the two campuses, but also gives a clear signal down into the service tunnels that run underneath the buildings.

"The features MOTOTRBO provides will be of immense value to our facilities, transportation and security teams."

– Larry Burich, Executive Director of Operations and Facilities Management, University of St. Francis

Results:

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"When our security team is driving to the Twin Oaks campus from the main or Rialto, they can communicate with each other via MOTOTRBO radios, almost to the edge of Twin Oaks, which is nearly four miles away," Burich says. "As we move forward with our transition to all digital, the features MOTOTRBO provides will be of immense value to our facilities, transportation and security teams; especially the ability to link all of our remote campus repeaters through the Internet with MOTOTRBO's IP Site Connect."

With the new MOTOTRBO radios, the University of St. Francis Safety and Security Department now has:

Motorola MOTOTRBO XPR Digital Radios

- **Communications throughout the campus:** With the old radio system, campus security was unable to communicate with the classrooms located on the lower level; into the tunnels below the buildings; or between the main and downtown campuses. Today those dead spots or coverage gaps are virtually eliminated on both campuses; and the extended range of the MOTOTRBO system enables seamless communications between the campuses.
- **Enhanced privacy:** Text messaging allows the Safety and Security team to quickly and discretely send information, either through pre-programmed emergency notifications or short, free-form messages. "With private, discreet communication on campus being a priority, MOTOTRBO provides USF with multiple communication paths through features like One-to-One calling, private free form text messaging, Radio ID, and Emergency Call," says Uraski.
- **Crisper audio:** MOTOTRBO radio technology suppresses background noise and improves audio quality. "When we put the digital system in, we were shocked at the clarity we were getting, even two miles away," says Uraski. "It's almost like you're standing right next to the person."
- **Greater calling capacity:** MOTOTRBO digital radios double the capacity of the university's old analog radios, enabling more officers to communicate over existing licensed channels, without worrying about interference.

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About Miner Electronics

With locations in Hammond and Munster, Indiana and Joliet, Illinois, Miner Electronics has provided effective business communication strategies since its beginning in a basement workshop back in the early 1950s. Today, Miner Electronics has grown to become one of Chicagoland's and Northwest Indiana's premier suppliers and service providers for Motorola two-way radio systems.

- **Cost effective migration to digital:** MOTOTRBO radios give USF a viable migration path to digital by phasing out the analog system over time. "With the dual-mode capability, these radios give us a very cost effective way to migrate at our own pace," says Uraski.
- **Virtual force expansion:** Not all of the university's 15 officers are on duty at the same time, while the maintenance staff has around 12 employees on duty at all times. The dual-mode capability allows the Campus Safety and Security team to switch to analog mode and immediately contact Maintenance to help out in an emergency or small crisis situation, such as evacuating or closing off a building or diverting traffic away from a flooded area. "It's like we can multiply our security force as needed in real-time," says Uraski.
- **Reduced operational cost:** "Keeping costs down and having our radios continue working through long shifts and in adverse weather conditions is critical," says Bob Tenuta, CFO, University of St. Francis. "We chose MOTOTRBO because of the IP57 submersible rating, which means less downtime and fewer repairs. In addition, the IMPRES Batteries give us nearly double the talk time."

Looking forward

Future plans for the University of St. Francis include leveraging new third party development plans for the MOTOTRBO, including applications such as UPC and asset tagging, and integration with the wireless data and VoIP.

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