The Computerworld Honors Program

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Final Copy of Case Study

Status:
Laureate

Year:
2013

Organization Name:
City of Ann Arbor

Organization URL:
www.a2gov.org

Project Name:
Technology, Integration and Collaboration to Support Fire Incident Response and Command

Please select the category in which you are submitting your entry:
Safety & Security

Please provide an overview of the nominated project. Describe the problem it was intended to solve, the technology or approach used, how it was innovative and any technical or other challenges that had to be overcome for successful implementation and adoption. (In 300 words or less.)

In Washtenaw County, MI fire responders have long relied on outdated paper maps and hand-drawn pre-plans while responding to emergencies. Dispatch technology, mobile computers and the record system were standalone, silo systems - where agencies had access to technology. And dispatching of emergency service had long been handled by numerous stand-alone dispatching centers. The City of Ann Arbor Fire Department deployed a comprehensive software platform for managing, communicating, responding to, and reporting critical incidents. The solution based on Adashi and ESRI technology, combines proven incident response and incident command capabilities in a networked

emergency management system for coordinated use across all agencies, departments, and staff levels. The City opted to join a regional dispatching consortium, the Huron Valley Ambulance (HVA) authority. Currently, HVA and its affiliated organizations provide fire dispatch and 9-1-1 paramedic ambulance service to about 1,000,000 residents in all or part of eight counties in southeast and south central Michigan. The next step was to develop real-time integration between silo systems supporting Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD), mobile data computers (MDC) and the records management system (RMS). After the successful pilot, the neighboring City of Ypsilanti expressed interest and joined on the same system. Currently, plans are being developed to deploy this solution countywide, hosted by the City of Ann Arbor with two additional agencies now using the platform. This is a real success story of technology, integration and collaboration that can only enhance response to emergency calls for services.

When was this project implemented or last updated? (Please specify month and year.) Has it incorporated new technologies and/or other innovations since its initial deployment? (In 300 words or less.)

This project was initially implemented in March of 2012. In September 2012, an automated interface was implemented that copies elapsed times for enroute and arrival times and sends notes to a report management system. In September, a minor change was made to the user interface so that fire staff can push a button to record "in route" and "arrival" times instead of waiting on a dispatcher to enter that for them.

Is implementation of the project complete? If no, please describe the project's phases and which phase the project is now in. (In 300 words or less.)

This is in production and can be scaled up with minimal effort.

Please provide at least one example of how the technology project has benefited a specific individual or organization. Feel free to include personal quotes from individuals who have directly benefited from the work. (In 300 words or less.)

Now, when a call for service is received by HVA, the location is immediately sent to ADASHI running on a ruggedized laptop in a fire truck or in a Battalion Chief's vehicle. Detailed CAD information is streamed to the laptops and the quickest route to the incident is calculated for each vehicle. Real-time GPS tracking allows all units to track each other, providing a common and complete operating picture. This is especially important during a mutual aid calls with other jurisdictions where the Battalion Chief may not have direct access to other jurisdiction's staff and vehicles. Detailed GIS information, including fire hydrants (and their

statuses) and current road construction, is readily available via touch screen. This is particularly valuable in both navigating to dense downtown locations and in locating rural addresses and fire hydrants. Additionally, HVA hosts the central ADASHI server within their datacenter at HVA's Central Dispatch Center, allowing them to monitor all participants' vehicle locations on a single large monitor. In addition, any new participants are easily added to the system.

Would this project be considered an innovation, a best practice or other notable advancement that could be adopted by or tailored for other organizations and uses? If yes, please describe that here. (In 300 words or less.)

We consider this both an innovation and a best practice. Its an innovation because the City of Ann Arbor took existing systems and combined them in a way that provides new value to our customers - in this case, the Fire Departments in Washtenaw County. Its a best practice because the project uses standard technology, services, business processes and standard operating procedures that can be readily found and are currently in use across the country. This process can be repeated anywhere there is the political will to do so. Now that the system is running for both the City of Ann Arbor and the City of Ypsilanti, local Fire Chiefs and HVA Regional Committee are actively pursuing deployment of this system Countywide. This collaboration will assist in: Strengthening local partnerships; having a positive financial impact, given new agencies must only consider hardware and software costs to "plug into" the existing system; funding for smaller agencies that would not have the budget or technical support to accomplish this on their own.

If there are any other details that the judges should know about this project, please note them here. (In 300 words or less.)

This really was a community effort and took many partners to accomplish. The key participants are: City of Ann Arbor Administration, Fire Department and IT Department, Washtenaw County Administration and IT Department, Huron Valley Ambulance (HVA), City of Ypsilanti Fire Department, other local Fire Department jurisdictions in Washtenaw County.