

CASE STUDY

Kanawha County Emergency Ambulance – November 2007

Kanawha County Emergency Ambulance
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Prior to the mid-1970's, the county of Kanawha in West Virginia utilized funeral home and wrecker services for most of the ambulance service requests. However, in 1977 by authority of the Kanawha County Commission under the Emergency Services Act of 1975, the Kanawha County Emergency Ambulance Authority (KCEAA) was established as a non-profit organization. Now, 30 years later, Kanawha answers approximately 50,000 ambulance requests each year.

KCEAA employs 225 full-time EMTs, Paramedics and support staff, with 35 licensed ambulances operating out of 14 stations. At peak, 30 ambulances are staffed with an EMT and a Paramedic. KCEAA services the Charleston Area Medical Center, along with two other hospitals included in a 960 square mile area of coverage, and posts a response time of 8 minutes on 90% of their calls. Two ambulances are staffed with Critical Care Nurses and handle critically ill patients and high risk neonates.

Technology used at Kanawha County Emergency Ambulance

Prior to purchasing the *Sweet*-Billing system, KCEAA utilized an in-house billing system developed by a local supplier. Since the supplier was very small, they were not able to provide the support of the system that was needed as KCEAA grew, nor the increased functionality that the growing system required. By switching to the *Sweet*-Billing system, KCEAA was not only able to gain the functionality and support services needed, but also the data integration and transfer capability from the *Sweet*-CAD dispatch system into the *Sweet*-Billing system, saving the company data entry time. The reporting capability that also came along with the *Sweet*-Billing and *Sweet*-CAD systems have provided KCEAA with improved reporting and analysis capability to better measure and manage business systems.

KCEAA is unique in that they operate two separate communication centers: the 911 center and the 7-digit county center. Because of the need to constantly manage resources between the two centers, KCEAA has found the *Sweet*-CAD and *Sweet*-AVL (automatic vehicle location) very valuable in meeting the transportation needs in the most efficient and effective means. Jeff Harbour, Communications Manager for KCEAA, explains, "No matter where the deficiency is, we can see where our trucks are through the *Sweet*-AVL capability; by using the Recommend feature in the *Sweet*-CAD system, we are able to send the closest ambulance to the scene."

The current version of *Sweet*-CAD and AVL systems have been in place since July of 2005 (a previous Ortivus CAD product was used prior to that) and KCEAA has found many uses that have benefited business operations. "It keeps people honest," said Jeff. "You can see where everyone is all the time and it also keeps us from crossing trucks [sending a truck to a scene where a closer truck could have been dispatched]." Jeff says that they like the fact that a specific address can be viewed at points on the map, and also says that they like utilizing the paging functionality in *Sweet*-CAD. In managing up to 31 resources and 18 calls simultaneously, KCEAA utilizes the *Sweet*-CAD system to its fullest. "With Group Scheduled Incidents and Archived Incidents, we can look into the future so that we can make adjustments as needed, using only the resources needed



and thereby, saving money," said Jeff. "We can also look at past patterns of holidays and other reoccurring events to predict and efficiently schedule the resources needed during those times."

Customer Service

Jeff emphasized the importance of customer service in the EMS industry. "If there is one thing that I could tell other EMS providers that I've learned over the years, it is to listen to the customer," said Jeff. "Ambulance service is about 10% healthcare and 90% customer service."

On that note, Jeff also complimented the customer service that he receives from Ortivus. He said that KCEAA receives good support and when they had a past hardware failure and had to cut over to a new server and operating system, that they were able to do so without significant downtime, which he credited to Ortivus Support Services.

Contact

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