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RELIABLE PANASONIC SOLUTIONS HELP MORGANTON DPS SERVE AND PROTECT

DEPARTMENT DEPENDS ON
PANASONIC ARBITRATOR 360° HD,
TOUHPAD AND TOUGHBOOK
RUGGED MOBILE COMPUTERS

CHALLENGE

The Morganton, NC, Department of Public Safety needed an in-car video evidence solution and rugged, reliable mobile computers to keep their officers efficient and connected, without the threat of ongoing technical problems so IT staff can be free to focus on more strategic priorities.

SOLUTION

Morganton utilizes a range of Panasonic technology including Arbitrator 360°™ HD and Arbitrator 360° in-car digital video recording systems as well as Toughpad® FZ-G1 rugged tablets and Toughbook® rugged laptops, in vehicles and elsewhere on the force.

RESULT

Free of major technical issues and equipped with dependable Panasonic solutions, Morganton officers are capturing high-quality video evidence from their vehicles and are working more efficiently in the field.



“We still have Panasonic products on the road that are seven years old and function wonderfully.”

**—Suzanne J. Brandon, Network Administrator,
Morganton DPS**

Located in scenic western North Carolina, Morganton’s Department of Public Safety is tasked with providing law enforcement and fire protection services to a community of about 17,000 people.

Like many other public safety agencies across the country, technology is playing an increasingly critical role in how Morganton DPS protects and serves its constituents. This includes video evidence collection systems in vehicles, and the use of laptops and tablets in vehicles and elsewhere.

However, budgets don’t always keep up with the department’s needs, and their IT staff is often stretched thin. These factors make it all the more important to invest in devices that can be relied on for the long haul, said Suzanne J. Brandon, Morganton DPS network administrator.

“There aren’t enough hours in the day for me to deal with maintenance issues and troubleshooting,” Brandon said. “I can’t be a revolving door of broken laptops and broken cameras. I need the products to just run and be reliable—there are so many other things I need to maintain.”

The agency found this reliability in Panasonic, Brandon said, and that’s one of the reasons they have been a Panasonic customer for more than seven years. Today, the agency has equipped approximately 60 vehicles with Panasonic Arbitrator 360° HD and Arbitrator 360° in-car digital video recording systems, and has also deployed nearly 100 Panasonic Toughpad® FZ-G1 rugged tablets and Panasonic Toughbook® rugged laptops.

“We still have Panasonic products on the road that are seven years old and function wonderfully,” she said. “We just don’t have those technical issues.”

ARBITRATOR PROVIDES RELIABLE VIDEO EVIDENCE CAPTURE

Morganton DPS was one of the first agencies in the country to upgrade to Panasonic Arbitrator 360° HD rugged in-car digital video recording systems after using Arbitrator 360° systems for several years. The agency now uses a mix of the two models. Supporting up to five HD cameras in and around an emergency vehicle, including a Full HD 1080p front camera, the Arbitrator 360° HD provides a full 360-degree view with unmatched clarity, fields of view and color representation to maximize situational awareness.

A key feature of the Arbitrator system is its ability to wirelessly offload video files from the vehicle via Wi-Fi, Brandon said.

“A lot of other camera companies were promising wireless offload, but it wasn’t working for us,” she said. “The Arbitrator does working wireless offload. And I don’t have to maintain it—it’s self-sufficient.”

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The systems’ rugged durability is also valuable, Brandon said. She recalled an officer-involved collision in the past involving a vehicle that was equipped with an in-car camera from another manufacturer.

“As soon as the car hit the curb, the camera shut off and we lost all the video. It dumped the hard drive and that was it,” she said. “I think I spent four hours on the phone with them. We couldn’t get the video out of the car, and I couldn’t get any support from the company.”



TABLET UPGRADE BOOSTS OFFICER EFFICIENCY

In addition to the Arbitrator in-car video evidence collection systems, Morganton DPS relies on about 70 Panasonic Toughbook devices – including fully rugged Toughbook 31 and Toughbook 30 laptops, and semi-rugged Toughbook 53 laptops. Recently they began upgrading to Toughpad FZ-G1 rugged tablets equipped with Verizon Wireless 4G LTE, and they currently have about 20 in the field.

Running the Windows® operating system with enterprise-grade batteries and connectivity options, the Toughpad FZ-G1 packs the features and durability of a rugged laptop into a 10-inch, 2.4 lb. package. Brandon said that Morganton officers appreciate the extra space in their vehicles and love the ability to quickly remove the tablets and use them outside the vehicle.

“The laptop was too bulky and awkward to take in and out of the car, but the tablets are ... wow,” she said. “The officers love that they can take pictures and upload them directly with the report. Now, they can snap some photos and take care of it all without using their own personal devices. That’s been a huge benefit for them.”