# MARION COUNTY, FLORIDA

## ALWAYS-ON AVAILABILITY FOR PUBLIC SAFETY Communications 911 Services

Marion County in north central Florida encompasses more than 330,000 square miles—an area larger than the state of Rhode island—and is home to more than 332,500 people. The Marion County Public Safety Communications Center, one of two public safety answering points within the county, dispatches emergency 911 services for Marion County Fire Rescue, Marion County Sheriff's Office, Dunnellon Police Department, Dunnellon Fire Department, and Belleview Police Department. The Center handles approximately 170 emergency 911 calls each day and its annual call volume is increasing at a rate of five percent per year.

### Business Challenge

As part of its ongoing effort to maintain sustainable operations and improve delivery of services, Marion County Public Safety decided to consolidate its multiple police, fire, and EMS agencies on a single county-wide communications system. The County needed an advanced, state-of-the-art Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) system that would help its Public Safety Communications Center personnel manage a large amount of information—unit locations, unit statuses, incidents pending, active incidents, and other critical data— while calmly assisting and reassuring 911 callers. At the same time, it needed a system that would enable seamless communication among dispatchers, law enforcement, firefighters, and paramedics across a large geographic area.

### Quick Facts

#### Solution Profile
- Communication system for busy dispatch center that serves a county spanning more than 330,000 square miles
- Consolidation of law enforcement, fire, and EMS agencies from multiple towns on one county-wide communication system
- State-of-the-art Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) system with integrated mapping and mobile data communications
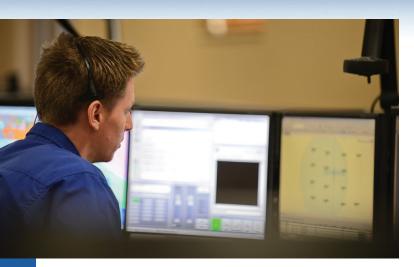- Fault-tolerant server platform providing continuous availability of their most critical CAD system

#### Products
- TriTech Inform CAD software
- Stratus ftServer 4500 system

#### Services
- TriTech Customer Support
- Stratus 24/7/365 Support Services

Finally, Marion County required that the system be up and running 24/7/365 to support dispatchers and first responders in time-critical emergency situations where every second counts.

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For an **Always-On** World

## High-Performance CAD Software

A satisfied TriTech client since 1996, Marion County decided to expand its Inform CAD footprint to support coordinated, efficient emergency response among multiple agencies across jurisdictional boundaries. Marion County's TriTech Inform solution includes fully integrated CAD and mobile data communications with integrated mapping capabilities—all of which use a common workflow that optimizes the way the Communications Center manages, processes, and communicates information to law enforcement, fire and EMS agencies. The solution's key features include:

- **Call Taking and Dispatching:** Streamlines call taking and dispatching by prioritizing and displaying information and recommendations, thereby empowering Communication Center staff to make better decisions and take quicker action.

- **Mobile Data Communications:** Enables dispatchers to pass along vital information—real-time incident details, location of nearby units, historical data, and more—to field unit personnel for faster, safer, and more effective emergency response.

- **Integrated Mapping with Live Routing:** Helps dispatchers to graphically view incident, unit, and routing information. The mobile units use an integrated Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) service that allows dispatchers to keep track of where they are and where they are travelling from—not just their last known location—for improved emergency response times and field unit safety.

"We realized pretty early on that TriTech's Inform CAD was the CAD system that would best enable us to deliver exceptional public safety services to Marion County citizens," said Bill McConnell, manager of Marion County's Public Safety Communications Center. "It offered the support for multi-agency consolidation and intercommunications, including state-of-the-art mobile connectivity between dispatchers and field units, needed to improve response times and keep our county safe."

"The high-performance, continuously available TriTech/Stratus solution has proven instrumental in providing the mission-critical services Marion County citizens expect and deserve. It exceeds my expectations every day."

**Bill McConnell**
Manager, Marion County Public Safety
Communications Center

## The Business Solution

After evaluating available solutions, Marion County selected TriTech Inform software running on a fault-tolerant Stratus® ftServer® 4500 system for its new county-wide public safety communications system.

## A Zero-Downtime Server Platform

Marion County selected the Stratus ftServer 4500 system as the server platform based on its ability to deliver 99.999+% availability of its most critical CAD solution. The ftserver's fault-tolerant architecture eliminates single points of failure and addresses the hardware, software, and serviceability issues that can lead to downtime or data loss. Duplex hardware components process the same instructions at precisely the same time. If a component fails, its partner simply continues normal operations. Because replicated components perform the same instructions at the same time, there is no interruption in processing, no loss of performance, and no loss of data integrity—even if a component fails.

The ftServer 4500 also features an Automated Uptime™ Layer that constantly monitors more than 500 system components and sensors to proactively identify, handle, and report faults. A "call-home" feature alerts Stratus of a pending problem before system interruptions occur to help ensure consistently high performance and eliminate unscheduled downtime.

"A lot of vendors we talked to promised that their servers would be up most of the time, but only Stratus provided the proven continuous availability we needed in a mission-critical public safety environment," commented McConnell. "Thanks to ftServer and its guaranteed uptime, I can go home and sleep soundly at night. It's a highly reliable server platform."

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>
> **Bill McConnell**
> Manager, Marion County Public Safety Communications Center

## Dependable Service with Rapid Turnaround

Vendor service was another important consideration for Marion County Public Safety when selecting its consolidated communications system technology.

"In our time-sensitive line of work, the service we receive from vendors is critical," added McConnell. "Both Stratus and TriTech have been consistently dependable, delivering technical service and support with fast turnaround 24/7/365."

## The Results

With multiple agencies now on one CAD system, Marion County Public Safety Communications Center dispatchers can handle law enforcement, fire, and EMS calls at once, saving precious time—30 to 40 seconds per call—in emergency situations. Once the incident is assigned to the responding units, the system automatically transfers critical information to the mobile units in paramedic and deputy vehicles. That way, as the call taker continues to interact with the 911 caller, vital information is made available to all relevant public safety personnel, including dispatchers, police, fire, and EMS, in real time for faster, more efficient emergency response.

Since implementing its consolidated county-wide communications system, the Communications Center has not experienced any unscheduled downtime. Thanks to the TriTech/Stratus solution, the County's public safety personnel are confident that they will always have access to the tools and information they need to deliver superior emergency response services to citizens.

"I cannot overstate the importance of system performance and reliability in the Communications Center," said McConnell. "The TriTech/Stratus solution allows our dispatchers to seamlessly communicate critical information to multiple public safety agencies—minute after minute, day after day—to save lives, protect property, and keep our citizens safe."

Marion County Public Safety is one of only a handful of dual accredited centers of excellence across the globe. The Communications Center's commitment to Next Generation 911, its quick-thinking dispatchers, and its state-of the-art county-wide communication system, all played a role in achieving that accreditation. As a result, other agencies turn to Marion County Public Safety for advice and recommendations on how to improve their dispatch centers.

"The high-performance, continuously available TriTech/Stratus solution has proven instrumental in providing the mission-critical services Marion County citizens expect and deserve," concludes McConnell. "It exceeds my expectations every day."

## About Stratus Technologies

In today's always-on world, applications run under increasingly demanding circumstances. With these escalating demands comes greater pressure to prevent even the smallest amount of application downtime. Companies are responding to this need for always-on solutions by searching for technologies that either conform to or enhance their current IT infrastructures.

Stratus Technologies' solutions enable rapid deployment of always-on infrastructures, from enterprise servers to clouds, without any changes to your applications. Stratus products (software and servers) combined with Stratus people, enable customers to prevent downtime before it occurs, ensuring uninterrupted 24/7/365 performance of essential business operations.

To learn more, visit **stratus.com**

"Three words that come to mind with regard to the Stratus/TriTech solution are 'dependability,' 'service,' and 'accountability.'"

**Bill McConnell**
Manager, Marion County Public Safety
Communications Center

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