

Allegheny County took delivery of their new state-of-the-art Command Post in May of this year. It was the culmination of several years of planning and construction, with many members of the EMA staff and vendors involved. The chassis is by Pierce, and the custom built 31.5 foot body and interior by LDV Inc, of Burlington, Wisconsin. The vehicle has 2 slide out areas for increased work area with climate control, and the latest electronics, including on board satellite link with WIFI networks and telephone, infrared imaging and color video on telescoping masts, video downlinks from news helicopters, wireless weather stations, and access to all new feeds via Direct TV, to name a few. It has a 20Kw generator and enough fuel to be self sustaining for 4 days.

As for radio equipment, the county came to Staley Communications with an idea of what they needed the vehicle to be capable of in the way of communications, and we brainstormed with them on solutions. They needed to have access to all bands, at multiple locations in the vehicle, and the flexibility to change its' configuration on the fly if need be. Dispatch consoles appeared to be the best solution, controlling CDM 1550 mobiles via digital links, making it easy for a technician to make changes to the radios without the need to make changes to the console configurations or wiring.

Staley Communications installed six MCC5500 positions, utilizing laptops to save space. There are 14 CMD 1550 mobiles connected to the console system, along with 3 XTL5000 secure capable consolettes for access to P25 systems, and an ACU 1000 with phone patch and its' own set of 8 radios. With this configuration, they have access to low band ranges from 29-50 MHZ, VHF including Amateur and Maritime, 403 to 512 MHZ, and 800 conventional and trunking systems, plus the PA state radio system.

With the large number of radios involved, space became a major issue. Only 2-six foot cabinets were allocated for radio equipment, and it took some trial and error, plus custom built mounting arrangements, to fit the console control equipment and radio infrastructure gear in this small space. By using low profile shelving, back to back mounting, and ingenuity, we finally came up with a design that worked, and still made it fairly easy to service: the cabinets unbolt and roll out for access. Several trips were made to the LDV factory while the vehicle was under construction, to pre-run the wiring before the interior was finished. We also had the equipment cabinets shipped to us several weeks before the vehicle arrived, and had them assembled and pre-wired. The antennas-45 of them- are mounted on a square channel around the perimeter of the roof. Antenna separation required careful planning, and there are few interference problems.

Command 400 made its debut at the PGA tournament on June 7th, 2007, at Oakmont Country Club, as the center of information and control. All of the major systems were put to the test, with only minor technical issues. Other refinements are ongoing as a result of feedback from the event, and Staley Communications continues to provide support for Allegheny County in every way we can.