



consoles you can count on



# City of Richardson Texas Case Study

Often confused as a neighborhood of its larger sibling just 13 miles away, today, Richardson, TX, has many compelling reasons to emerge from the Texas-sized shadows cast by neighboring Dallas. Once considered just a sleepy suburb of Big D, now Richardson is known as “The Telecom Corridor” – attracting many of the world’s largest telecommunications and networking companies to set up shop inside its 28-square-mile border.

The 104,000 residents who call Richardson home are proud of its consistent selection as one of the nation’s best and safest places to live. The responsibility for the well being of the people of Richardson is managed by an E911 communications center that coordinates the capabilities of its police and fire departments, as well as animal services and an emergency management center that is activated during crises.

## Replace or Upgrade?

Like many E911 communications centers faced with the challenges brought by growth and technological evolution, Richardson decided that it would be best to replace — rather than upgrade — its 19-year-old analog system. This would allow the city’s emergency responders to leverage more advanced radio features, enhance and customize dispatchers’ screens, and handle future expansion.

Fortunately, Project 25 (P25) – an initiative of safety organizations including the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials and the National Association of State Telecommunications Directors, offered a benchmark for digital radio equipment, incorporating elements of interoperability, spectrum efficiency, and cost economies.

Avtec, a proven innovator of communications console technology at the forefront of meeting P25 standards, offered in its pure-IP Scout™ console system the type of powerful P25-compliant solution that Richardson needed to bridge the gap between legacy and new technologies, while offering substantial cost savings.



## Richardson Leads The Way In 911 Via Text

In May 2014, Richardson joined a nationwide trend by allowing residents in crisis to send a text to 911 as a means of summoning emergency assistance. Richardson communications manager Liz Cole told the Dallas Morning News that adding the capability was important to keep up with the changing way in which people communicate. “We’ve got to be able to support the public’s expectation...911 from any device at any time,” she said.

## SCOUTing a Solution

In January 2012, Avtec deployed 10 Scout consoles in Richardson's E911 Communications Center — making Richardson the first North American municipality to use a multi-vendor trunked radio system using the APCO Project 25 Console Sub-System Interface (P25 CSSI) standard. Avtec's Scout IP console system seamlessly connected to

the city's Cassidian P25 radio system.

The open architecture allows Richardson to select best-of-breed components—meaning it can choose radio systems, portable radios, consoles, and logging recorders that best serve its needs and not worry about compatibility.

Other major benefits of Richardson's new open-standards communications center:

- Ability to handle more than 7,000 calls in a typical day
- Taxpayer savings of more than \$4 million and improved radio coverage
- Flexibility to choose new standards-based products in the future; no “lock-in”
- Ability to leverage existing IP networks saving circuit costs
- Scalable IP console infrastructure that can easily support adjacent agencies
- Multiple levels of redundancy for disaster recovery



## Project Outcome . . .

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The new communications network cost the city one-third the estimated cost of an alternative system – which, said Richardson CIO Steve Graves, allowed the city to activate a fourth communications tower and to purchase new radios for public safety officers.

The expanded capabilities have also delivered enhanced safety to Richardson’s emergency responders. Scout’s end-to-end redundancy eliminates interruptions of radio communications, and the improved dispatching efficiency has shortened response times – both within the city limits and in coordinating with other nearby agencies.

Scout’s custom configuration – which provides touch-screen selections that replicate the location and function of switches and buttons on the legacy system – reduced the time needed to train dispatchers on their new consoles.

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