

## SouthernLINC Wireless Tailors Wireless Communications for North Georgia Brick Dispatchers and Delivery Drivers

### Overview

With more than 25 years under the company's belt, North Georgia Brick Co. Inc. (NGB) has emerged as one of the leading brick distributors in the United States. From five distribution locations in metropolitan Atlanta, NGB employs a large professional delivery organization. The company strives to exceed the needs of its broad customer base in residential and commercial markets.

NGB needed a reliable way for dispatchers and delivery drivers to communicate and track the status of orders. In 2000, SouthernLINC Wireless was selected to provide a tailored communications solution for the brick distributor.

### Challenge

NGB's experienced dispatch and delivery force possesses superior knowledge in all aspects of the brick and masonry industry. The company required a comprehensive wireless solution to help it make prompt deliveries with its fleet of more than 50 trucks. NGB's success is dependent on reliability, and with a large distribution area spanning the northern half of Georgia, dispatchers were unable to easily determine the status of the company's trucks and deliveries. What's more, drop-off points for deliveries could vary, so drivers had to remain flexible enough to change destinations within minutes, whether or not they were familiar with navigation to the new location.

"We deliver 300-plus orders per day with our 50-plus trucks running three to four routes daily," said Brad Simons, North Georgia Brick dispatch manager. "We need a process that requires as little manual intervention as possible to guarantee on-time job site deliveries. With five brick yards and more than 15 warehouses to move inventory from, fulfilling orders and dispatching trucks in a timely manner is critical."

While both central dispatch and the drivers communicated via commercial two-way radios that received signals from two analog towers, the dispatchers and drivers had no privacy during conversations and service could be spotty if trucks were out of the towers' range. Relying on analog towers and two-way radios to communicate private company information over public airwaves was an inferior way to conduct business. NGB required an easier way to supervise and direct its delivery trucks. In addition to managing deliveries, the company needed instant, private communication between the drivers and dispatchers, so that potential changes in delivery routes wouldn't disrupt the work schedule. Furthermore, if inclement weather should strike inside NGB's large distribution area, drivers would need a reliable communications solution.

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## NORTH GEORGIA BRICK

Category: Construction / Data Services

### SouthernLINC Wireless Solves Communications Needs for North Georgia Brick

#### CHALLENGE

With a staff located in five offices and a fleet of more than 50 brick delivery trucks, North Georgia Brick needed a sophisticated wireless communications and tracking system for its drivers. Dispatch Manager Brad Simons determined that commercial two-way radios operating via analog towers were outdated and that the company's communications system should integrate multiple solutions to better manage its mobile assets. NGB's service also needed to be able to store data, be easy to use and withstand the region's extreme weather.

#### SOLUTION

SouthernLINC Wireless has proven to be a valuable partner for NGB with its cellular and Push to Talk-enabled phones and iTRAK, a fleet management feature to keep dispatchers and drivers connected.

#### RESULT

Production and reliability improved due to SouthernLINC Wireless' communications solutions. These improvements affect operations, customer service and sales – which resulted in a positive bottom line. SouthernLINC Wireless changed the definition of communications for NGB.

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## Solution

After reviewing wireless solutions from several national and regional carriers, NGB chose SouthernLINC Wireless to address the dispatch and delivery teams' communications needs. Based on Motorola's iDEN (Integrated Digital Enhanced Network) technology, SouthernLINC Wireless provided a solution that combined Push to Talk two-way radio, cellular phone service, text messaging and wireless Internet and data access in one hand-held device. In addition to phone capabilities, SouthernLINC Wireless installed iTRAK™ GPS devices in each truck. The iTRAK Fleet Manager™ program provides real-time location and route tracking to NGB dispatchers.

SouthernLINC Wireless' network has built-in redundancies and extra security features to make sure communication is possible even during severe weather, so although inclement weather makes the roads messy and presents delays, drivers can rely on SouthernLINC Wireless service to help them reach dispatchers to obtain real-time information.

With the iTRAK Fleet Manager and GPS device, NGB can identify and respond to all customer status inquiries. The mounted iTRAK mobile device contains a GPS receiver and antenna, cellular modem/transceiver and an intelligent iTRAK computer board that controls and manages the storage and transmission of all position data. Critical information is transmitted via the cellular network to the iTRAK Fleet Manager servers, where NGB dispatcher can log in and view vehicle activity on live maps.

"By using SouthernLINC Wireless' system, our dispatchers can obtain data quickly and reliably, monitor all of our trucks at any time of day or night and download detailed reports," explained Simons. "It helps us streamline production costs because we can make informed decisions on the more efficient ways to route deliveries."

Distribution in the building industry is highly competitive, making superior customer service a critical success factor. With the robust communication service from SouthernLINC Wireless, NGB is now in a better position to ensure timely and accurate deliveries to its customers.

## Benefits

SouthernLINC Wireless has improved communications for NGB in the following ways:

- **Efficiency:** The iTRAK system sends data in real-time to the dispatchers when the vehicle is in motion. Therefore, drivers and dispatchers do not need to have unnecessary conversations. Communications solutions from SouthernLINC Wireless help NGB reduce delivery cycle times and increase the number of loads per shift. "
- **Reliability:** SouthernLINC Wireless is a reliable communications tool for NGB because even under the most severe weather conditions, dispatchers can keep track of their trucks and identify problems within minutes.
- **Instant communications:** SouthernLINC Wireless' Push to Talk two-way radio provides an effective way for the dispatchers and drivers to instantly communicate. This is especially beneficial when the drivers must quickly re-route their deliveries to another location or need to contact dispatch for directions.



A Southern Company

southernlinc.com

1-866-480-5462

## BENEFITS

**Efficiency:**  
SouthernLINC Wireless' communications solutions help NGB reduce delivery cycle times and increase the number of loads per shift.

**Reliability:**  
Even when bad weather strikes, communication service from SouthernLINC Wireless keeps the NGB team connected.

**Instant communications:**  
Push to Talk two-way radio provides an effective technology for dispatchers and drivers to instantly communicate when changes need to be made on the fly.