

Stone County School District Appreciates the Reliability and Privacy of SouthernLINC Wireless Push To Talk Two-Way Radio Communications

Overview

Based in Wiggins, Miss., the Stone County School District has a student population of 2,700 among two elementary schools, a middle school and a high school. Keeping students safe is a top priority for district employees – from administrators and teachers to bus drivers and cafeteria workers. Stone County School District needed a private communications solution to coordinate work projects and activities across its multiple facilities and departments.

Challenge

School district officials had relied on VHF radios as their primary communications network, but conversations – no matter how sensitive or innocuous – could be heard by anyone tuned to the same channel. They also could be intercepted by anyone with a police scanner. That disturbed Mike Parker, transportation and maintenance director for the school district.

“With those old radios, anyone could pick up what you were saying,” said Parker.

The standard two-way radios also were bulky and unreliable. “Those old ones were just about useless. You didn’t know when they would work, and it was a hassle to deal with,” continued Parker.

Solution

In 1996, Parker and his colleagues looked to SouthernLINC Wireless, an integrated wireless communications service, to provide a better solution.

Unlike broadcasting over commercial two-way radios, the SouthernLINC Wireless Push To Talk (PTT) two-way radio service enables private, immediate communications by using iDEN (Integrated Digital Enhanced Network) technology from Motorola. No known scanner can intercept communications on an iDEN network. The school district’s employees can now exchange information using PTT, confident that the transmission remains secure.

The Stone County School District communicates with its employees via 51 handsets. The SouthernLINC Wireless network connects Parker with the grounds, transportation and maintenance crews; the superintendent, principals and assistant principals in all of the schools; the cafeteria managers and special education department. The phones keep everyone connected 24 hours a day, seven days a week with the push of a button.

“I love the private PTT service we have with SouthernLINC Wireless,” Parker said. “There’s no need for the entire district to hear when we have a bus that needs repair.

With SouthernLINC Wireless, the phones get used more because they’re reliable and convenient. The SouthernLINC Wireless system works 10 times better than anything we’ve ever had before.”

STONE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Category: Education

Stone County School District Counts on SouthernLINC Wireless to Stay Connected

CHALLENGE

Stone County School District personnel needed a way to reliably communicate with one another while keeping their conversations private. School officials were using two-way VHF radios, but the radios were unreliable and vulnerable – anyone tuning into the same channel or listening to a police scanner could monitor conversations.

SOLUTION

Utilizing Motorola’s iDEN technology, Push To Talk two-way radio service from SouthernLINC Wireless is a private communications transmission.

RESULTS

Push To Talk conversations among school district personnel can no longer be monitored by a scanner, effectively ensuring everyone’s privacy.

BENEFITS

Stone County School District personnel can quickly and dependably connect with each other and with colleagues from other public service agencies that also rely on the SouthernLINC Wireless network.

Along with the Stone County School District, the local fire, county roads and sheriff's departments also use SouthernLINC Wireless, which allows Parker to contact virtually anyone he needs within seconds.

"If I'm driving through the county and see a problem with a road or bridge, I can connect with someone immediately, and we can try and get the problem fixed before the buses even leave the schools," Parker said.

Benefits

According to Parker, SouthernLINC Wireless has improved communications and efficiencies for the Stone County School District in the following ways:

- *Private communications:* Stone County School District officials can rest assured that conversations among personnel remain private, since no known scanner can intercept messages on the SouthernLINC Wireless network.
- *Reliability:* The school district's staff often complained about the unreliability of their standard VHF radios. In contrast, service from SouthernLINC Wireless has worked dependably for them. In fact, the carrier's network is built to weather-grade specifications, meaning its cell sites can withstand winds up to 120 mph, heavy rain and ice loads.
- *Interoperability:* Many other public service agencies in and around Wiggins, Miss., also rely on SouthernLINC Wireless, so not only can Stone County School District officials connect with each other, but also with those colleagues in other departments and organizations.



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