



S U C C E S S S T O R Y

“You need to look at this one. It has so much more to offer!”

Helen Rasmussen, Skagit911 Director

Skagit 911 Director and IT Manager in agreement as they select Commercial Electronics and the HigherGround® Capture911™ Call Recording Solution

Skagit County

Located in northwest Washington, Skagit County is just over 1,900 square miles and includes portions of two national parks, North Cascades National Park and Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest. The county has 32 separate public safety agencies serving a population approaching 120,000. Located in the city of Mount Vernon, Skagit 911 is responsible for dispatching and coordinating emergency response for all 32 agencies. It also monitors radios for the United States Forest Service after hours.

Helen Rasmussen, Director of Skagit 911, heads the 38 member team of dedicated professionals charged with 24/7 operation. Mike Voss, Technical Service Manager, oversees IT including keeping the center’s many systems updated to ensure that the agency has the necessary tools to deliver the highest level of customer service as new technologies impact the 911 arena. Rasmussen relates, “Mike and I look at things differently; but we put it altogether for Skagit 911.”

High Expectations for New Solution

Rasmussen and Voss had begun the search for a new call recording solution that they could confidently entrust their recordings with and that would also meet current and future technology requirements, integrations, and robust cyber security expectations. A solution was needed to replace the agency’s older call recording system. Even with a possible update, it could not properly record VOIP. In addition, the system was dropping recordings and recording hours of silence.

After extensively evaluating several solutions, including testing one in house, they were ready to purchase. Then, while at a statewide meeting, Rasmussen was introduced to the Capture911 Next Generation recording solution. She was immediately impressed with the feature rich capabilities demonstrated by Bill Behar of Commercial Electronics Corporation. She told Voss, “Whoa! You need to look at this one. It has so much more to offer!”

Two approaches – One Goal

Immediately, they began vetting Capture911 and Commercial Electronics, an authorized HigherGround reseller. Rasmussen sought references from other agencies in the state of Washington including Patti Kelly of Whitcom911. She was impressed with Kelly’s recommendations of the HigherGround solution and

of Commercial Electronics responsive customer service.

She also thoroughly questioned Behar on the reporting feature and its capabilities. Rasmussen discovered that, although, Capture911 was not the least expensive, it did offer more value and more extensive reporting capabilities than the other contenders with its feature rich intuitive reporting solution.

Voss researched the technical aspects. He found that the Capture911 system would allow them to record “in the fashion that we wanted to.” This system also met his desired specifications. It offered ease of use and configuration. Plus, it had hardware redundancy, licensing flexibility, and the ability to record their Zetron Max radio system via IP. Furthermore, it had one of his most important requirements: a relational database back end to extract unlimited information and data.

S Y N O P S I S



Skagit 911 Emergency Communications

Center takes all 911 and cellular calls in Skagit County, WA.

Challenge
Find a new recording solution from industry partner that has great customer service.

Profile

- 38 employees
- Dispatches for 32 agencies
- Calls per year: 200,000+

Industry Partner Requirements

- Reputable and trustworthy
- Highly responsive customer service

Industry Partner
Commercial Electronics Corporation

Solution Requirements

- Flexible reporting capabilities
- Ease of use
- Customizable
- Hardware redundancy
- Licensing flexibility
- Ability to record “our way”
- Radio IP recording
- Integrate with current and future technologies/equipment.
- Relational database
- Meet robust cyber security model

Solution
Capture911 by HigherGround

With an eye on future upgrades and security requirements for the agency, they both wanted a solution that would move forward with them. Capture911 met these requirements that included a Spillman interface and SIP recording. It also exceeded the standards of their robust cyber security model that protects their mission critical systems.

Customizations After the Sale

After choosing their solution and new industry partner, installation went smoothly. It was a simple process to convert to Capture911. Soon the dispatch floor and management team were benefiting from the technical team's customizations.

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*Mike Voss
Technical Services Manager*

The intuitive web browser interface offers them more customization than they had before. Voss' team set up master screen configurations that were not only logical to them but also made sense to their telecommunicators and records staff. The five unique user screens were based on the user's responsibilities, including call taker, dispatcher, records, administration and tech support.

According to Voss, "There's a lot of flexibility which typically you don't find in other software. You can maneuver the data exactly how you want to see it with the Capture911 solution."

"I love the database! It's awesome" exudes Voss. "From IT's perspective, it's very easy to configure from the comfort of our offices instead of back in our refrigerated equipment room and in our parkas."

Reporting

With Capture911, they have also accomplished a key goal: to create a customizable report for channel utilization factor for any 24 hour period of time. With this report, at any given time, they can review

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*Helen Rasmussen
PSAP Director*

how much radio traffic there is on a radio frequency. They can look at a specific police department for a particular month and get totals on the amount of air time that's being used.

Playback

Rasmussen stated, "I am impressed with the playback feature. We do a lot of telephone search warrants. Our records folks are regularly producing recordings for law enforcement evidentiary purposes. Plus, I was struck by the ease of redacting. It's very simple to redact recordings and you have the ability to save certain things."

Supervisors are able to look at all of the interactions that are in the system including gradings and other related data. In addition, they are able to make recordings for telephonic search warrants. Then, because they also need to make recordings, records techs have access to everything but the gradings. The telecommunicators only have access to the playback features and are limited to a two hour look back.

Training

Training from Commercial Electronics has been a positive experience. "The technical training we've received on how to maintain the system or do technical tasks has been very good," says Voss.

Because, Capture911's interface is intuitive, the operations staff needed a minimal introduction to be up and running. Rasmussen sees this as positive. Because they have been using the system, she knows that when they go through formal training they will have more in depth questions.

Service and Support

The technical support from the industry partner has also met Voss and Rasmussen's expectations. "We have a very open and honest relationship with the staff at Commercial Electronics and that's pretty invaluable," says Voss. Voss appreciates the industry partner's

ability to remote in to their recording system. This not only assists in resolving technical issues, but also allows Skagit 911 tech staff to watch and learn from Commercial Electronics' technical team.

Industry Partner Relationship

Rasmussen is happy with her new industry partner, Commercial Electronics, "One of the things that impressed me in the sales process was Bill's knowledge of the Public Safety environment. On the flip side, when I asked him something he was not knowledgeable of, he would simply say 'I don't know and I'll get back with you' and he always did." Helen added, like "Bill kept in touch during the entire process and made sure that I knew he was available anytime, but he did not go overboard as some sales professionals do. To me this is important and it's an indicator of the type of customer service you're going to receive."

Honesty and Integrity

To Rasmussen and Voss, honesty and integrity are important in industry partner relationships. Rasmussen states, "Customer service is one of the most important pieces of purchasing process. Bill is still making sure we're getting what we need."

Voss concurs, "We wanted to have recording alarm notifications if a channel stops recording. Our Commercial Electronics technician set this up for us."

"We have a very open and honest relationship with the staff at Commercial Electronics and that's pretty valuable."

*Mike Voss
Technical Services Manager*

Conclusion

Skagit 911's selective criteria and much more was met by Commercial Electronics and Capture911. They are a perfect fit to assist the PSAP in continuing to meet its high 24/7 expectations of professionalism and highest levels of customer service.

When asked if Rasmussen and Voss would recommend Commercial Electronics and the Capture911 recording solution, Rasmussen answers confidently, "Yes, and we already have."

capture911™



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