



The Leader in E911 Solutions

Case Study: *Insurance Company*

“While the state law sparked our interest, we knew it was the right thing to do. It’s unrealistic to expect a guard or receptionist to constantly know your employees’ whereabouts.”

Dennis Richmond, Office Services Supervisor for Farmers Insurance Group®.

The Company

Farmers Insurance Group® includes one of the nation’s most respected and third-largest home and auto insurers. Some 500 Farmers employees are served by the company’s communications system at its service center in Aurora, Illinois, which is home to key staff functions and customer contact personnel who service customers in several states where Farmers operates. The facility consists of 100,000 square feet of office space covering three floors.

The Opportunity

Everyone knows safety pays, perhaps no one better than an insurance company. When Farmers uncovered a new state statute requiring employers occupying more than 40,000 square feet to have advanced communications functionality so 911 centers would know the exact location of a caller, not just the building’s address, Farmers decided to go the distance. It wanted to ensure added protections for its staff – and peace of mind for its managers knowing that their people and property would be able to receive an immediate response in the event of an emergency because its main telephone system would be properly equipped.

Intuitively, Farmers realized the value of having a fail-safe communications system and infrastructure. Beyond advocating safety as an integral part of its service offering, this particular office had encountered some emergencies of its own. In fact, the Illinois service center averaged one or two 911 calls each quarter. While most of the problems were of a medical nature, Farmers understood that despite its best efforts, the threat of much larger disaster is today all too real.

While the office had a comprehensive, employee-led emergency preparedness program in place, regularly conducted drills, and felt it was well-covered during normal office hours, growing numbers of Farmers employees are in its office at off hours, when not as many co-workers are present. At any given time, about 20 percent of its employees arrive early or stay late, sometimes working alone in areas of the expansive facility. One on-site security guard, it reasoned, was insufficient at these times to assist emergency response personnel who might be dispatched due to a 911 call to locate the caller.

The Solution

In late 2002, the company bought RedSky’s E911 Manager™ software product to provide enhanced station-location information to emergency response personnel who receive 911 calls. RedSky was selected because Farmers believed its product and customer support to be the most comprehensive and offer the greatest value. While others offered less expensive software

solutions, none were fully automated and self-monitoring, which meant that Farmers telecom staff wouldn't have to do time-consuming manual updates.

Over a two-month period, Farmers worked with RedSky's customer support team and its city fire marshal to develop station-specific location information – including the phone and office number, employee name and floor location – for every phone set in its facility served by its main communications system. Now, whenever someone calls 911, the dispatcher automatically gets the office and phone number, name and floor location of the caller. To stay current, the E911 system automatically gets updated when the telecom department makes a change in its telephone system.

The Impact

Each day, the RedSky solution regularly monitors any changes in Farmers' telephone system, and reflects those changes automatically in the regional 911 database used by Aurora firefighters, police and paramedics. Farmers' business leaders have peace of mind knowing that if and when an emergency strikes, local emergency response personnel will know the exact location of the caller, especially at off hours when fewer employees are present. While the application is now deployed at its Illinois facility, driven initially by the state law, Farmers is actively considering expansion of the capability to its other facilities. When it purchased the RedSky solution, it knew that the application was highly scalable and could easily accommodate growth.

Shortly after the system became operational, it was quickly called into action. In one case, the 911 dispatcher knew the name and floor location of an employee who was feeling faint. In another case the dispatcher knew which employee accidentally dialed 911 and hung up. Before the E911 solution was in place, paramedics would rely on Farmers personnel to identify a 911 caller's location during normal business hours, and they might have to search the three-floor, 100,000 square foot building during non-business hours.

Following are comments from Farmers' manager who directed installation of the E911 solution:

On round-the-clock emergency communications support:

"We're not just an 8-to-5 company. An E911 system offers additional protections all day long."

On the system's ability to easily handle frequent employee relocations:

"With RedSky's automated solution, we don't have to worry about updating a second database. We do it once in our switch, and our E911 system automatically reflects the change."

On the decision to choose RedSky versus others:

"We closely examined four E911 software providers. RedSky clearly stood out."

On RedSky's service:

"We wanted more than software. We wanted someone to work with us every step of the way. RedSky's support personnel more than lived up to our expectations."

On future expansion:

"With this one application, the RedSky solution can easily grow to include our other locations – anywhere in the U.S."