



The size of a PDA, the Cradlepoint PHS300 Personal Wi-Fi Hotspot instantly creates a Wi-Fi hotspot that any Wi-Fi enabled device can connect to—laptop, camera, PDA, etc. The PHS300 then connects those devices to the Internet via 3G mobile broadband, providing high-speed web access virtually anywhere.

Fire Rescue Squad Deploys Mobile Wi-Fi For Fraction of the Cost

CradlePoint PHS300 Helps First Responders Share Critical Information in Rugged, Rural Settings

SITUATION

Nassau County Fire Rescue serves Nassau County in northern Florida. The majority of its coverage area is rural, with an expansive coastal area under its protection, too. Brushfires and wildfires are a major challenge. The Nassau County Fire Rescue department uses 3G Broadband service for various types of web-based communications between squad members in the field and other entities. Before acquiring a CradlePoint PHS300 Personal WiFi Hotspot, web-based communications were restricted to whatever laptop had a 3G air card plugged into it.

CHALLENGE

The department wanted all team members to be able to share the 3G Broadband connection via a mobile Wi-Fi hot spot—instead it just being confined to a single laptop computer. Plus, they found it “cumbersome” having the USB air card plugged into the laptop that was relaying signals. Further, most of the available solutions for implementing mobile Wi-Fi hot spots were expensive.

SOLUTION

Sam Young, Deputy Chief of Nassau County Fire Rescue, got the process started. “I saw an article about CradlePoint routers in one of the IT journals,” says Sam. “So we purchased a [CradlePoint] PHS300 [Personal Wi-Fi Hotspot]. It cost a lot less than the other solutions.”

The PHS300—about the size of a Blackberry PDF—can be Velcroed to the wall of the command vehicle and provide a Wi-Fi hot spot so multiple laptops can 1) use web-based communications and 2) share information on the scene without bogging down the 2-way radio communication channel. With the CradlePoint, once dispatch gives out information, it’s out there instantaneously for everyone on the team to see and use.

“We don’t have to adapt the way we work. The PHS300 fits right in.”))

For example, teams can access GIS images with DMA overlays showing where homes and business structures are located in relation to the terrain. With the CradlePoint Wi-Fi, all the personnel on the scene can access and share this information at the same time...instantaneously.

The team can also call up Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) overlays to ensure that they are deploying vehicles and personnel to optimum effect. “In rugged terrain, where you can’t see over the next ridge, the ability to have a Wi-Fi network is critical for CAD dispatch issues and getting trucks in the right place,” reports Sam.

Nassau County Fire Rescue has found the PHS 300 useful for medical situations, too. For example, paramedics can monitor the EKG signals of a patient in the field using the laptop in the truck and also relay those transmissions to a destination hospital via the Internet. Before the team got the PHS300, it was cumbersome trying to use the laptop with the USB air card. But now—with the air card plugged into the PHS300—it’s out of the way, giving team members greater freedom of movement.

BENEFITS

The CradlePoint PHS300 Personal Wi-Fi Hotspot was an affordable solution that enhanced the abilities of the Nassau County Fire Rescue department:

- **Simple.** “Ease of setup was very good.”
- **Flexible.** “We don’t have to adapt how we work. [The PHS300] fits right in.”
- **Money-saving.** “[The PHS300] was one tenth to one fourth the cost of the other solutions.”
- **Compact.** “We can Velcro it to the wall of the command vehicle and it’s out of the way.”

How would Nassau County Fire Rescue sum up the PHS300? “It’s good stuff,” says Sam, speaking for the entire team. “It turns the entire vehicle into a Wi-Fi hot spot. We’re working with CradlePoint on implementing other capabilities, like persistency with caching and secure path VPN, which will make a good solution even better. They’ve been very responsive.”