Strathclyde Fire Selects Radio Solution from NTL/Westica

Submitted by: Westica

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Teaming Agreement Between NTL and Westica Provides Fire Brigade with Innovative Datacommunication Network

One of the largest fire brigades in Europe, Strathclyde Fire Brigade, has taken an innovative approach to upgrading their existing Wide Area Network (WAN), through the deployment of an extensive radio transmission network. NTL’s Public Safety group, in conjunction with the radio expertise of Westica, has provided the Brigade with a cost-effective, reliable and secure datacommunications solution following its contract win in February 2004.

The aim of the upgrade was to provide a fully integrated system, which was cost-effective, resilient and reliable to 7 main operation centres, in addition to a number of other fire stations. Previously, the interconnections to the main locations used leased-line services for delivery of data, while Isdn2 dial-up services were utilised at smaller locations with services provided by a number of diverse operators. The previous network was unable to support any of the modern applications desired by the brigade personnel. Strathclyde Fire Brigade were encouraged by the proposal from NTL/Westica offering an alternative to the traditional land lines. As a result of awarding the contract to NTL/Westica, the brigade would profit from an improved, future-proof network, an increase in transmission capacity, in addition to benefiting from increased ownership and control of the network. One key advantage for Strathclyde Fire Brigade is that almost all of their premises have hose-drying
  structures on site which provide ideal locations for mounting antennas. This minimised the use of third party sites, reducing costs and further increasing the Brigade’s control of the network.

Phase one of this project is to build a dual-ring network architecture around the brigade headquarters near Glasgow and surrounding areas. The network involves seven main sites, based on 18GHz (34Mbit/s) radio link equipment supplied by Westica and spur links based on Westica’s MRR800 1.4GHz Point-to-Point Multirate Radio systems. This equipment provides the brigade with up to 100 times higher transmission capacity than the former network. The Westica equipment met with the stated objectives of the Brigade, including ease of transmission over geographically challenging terrain. The radio network will be the platform for the latest Cisco high capacity layer 3 routing and switching technology, supplied by the Public Safety group within NTL. All services, including installation, planning and commissioning, were also provided as a combined offering from NTL and Westica. Additional phases of the project are expected to widen the coverage of the network around Strathclyd
 e, which covers an area of 13,850km2.

Both NTL and Westica have operations local to the Strathclyde Fire Brigade region, enabling all support services including training, to be provided with ease, with minimal associated costs.

Delighted with the results, Kenny Fraser, WAN Project Manager for Strathclyde Fire Brigade comments, “Throughout all stages of this contract we have experienced true professionalism from both companies. The collaboration of NTL/Westica has given us a solution that is flexible, scaleable, resilient and manageable, in addition to providing us with greater user access and increased data

bandwidth. It was clear to us that this particular package ensured an acceptable level of future-proofing, allowing future upgrades to be readily and economically achieved.“
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 About NTL
 The Broadcast division of NTL has a 48-year history in transmission and has helped pioneer the technologies of the digital age.
 NTL’s Public Safety group provides a full range of support services to the UK police, fire, ambulance and other emergency services including design and installation of integrated telecommunications systems, radio system maintenance and fully managed services.
 22 million UK homes receive ITV, Channel 4 and Five via NTL’s national broadcast transmitter networks. NTL Broadcast also provides transmission for most UK independent radio stations, both analogue and digital.
 NTL provides end-to-end media solutions to the broadcast industry across terrestrial, cable and satellite platforms. This includes satellite uplinking, satellite newsgathering, outside broadcast facilities, programme presentation, play-out and distribution.
 With a portfolio of over 2300 radio sites across the UK, NTL’s Wireless Solutions group specialises in shared mobile and cellular network infrastructure, from conventional masts and towers, urban and in-building solutions to access circuits, managed back-haul and core network provision.
 Further information can be found at www.ntlbroadcast.com

About Strathclyde Fire Brigade
Strathclyde Fire Brigade is one of the biggest in Europe, situated in the west of Scotland in the UK.
The brigade provides fire and emergency cover for around 2.3 million people who live and work in the 12 Unitary Authorities covered.
Its geographical area covers almost 14,000 square kilometres (about 5,500 square miles). The area includes 23 inhabited islands and has a coastline longer than that of France. Almost 2.3 million people live in over 930,000 households in the area, ranging from remote crofts and hamlets to Scotland's biggest city, Glasgow. For more information visit www.strathclyde.fire-uk.org

About Westica Ltd
Westica’s principal aim is to be a major strategic player in the emerging global telecommunications wireless infrastructure markets, through providing leading edge solutions backed by a world class quality and service culture. Support for this vision in the form of substantial institutional investment in recent years has accelerated the development of revolutionary technology leading to volume production and deployment of Westica’s growing product family. Further information is available from:
www.westica.co.uk

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