ITRONIX®

Case Study:

Massachusetts Environmental Police Department

Product: Itronix GoBook MAX

Application: Mobile police officers

Itronix Solution:
Built to handle the most demanding computing, the GoBook MAX is armed with a 700 MHz Pentium III processor, 20 GB shock-mounted hard drive, and is packaged in an intrinsically-safe die-cast magnesium case.

Its "bat hook" – a hard handle that allows the GoBook MAX to hook over the steering wheel – offered an extra measure of convenience and ergonomical support.

For more information contact:

Itronix Corporation
800-441-1306
509-624-6600
sales@itronix.com
www.itronix.com

OVERVIEW: The Massachusetts Environmental Police (MEP) department is a state law enforcement agency that enforces both state and federal laws on the waters and off the roads of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. 110 MEP officers spend the majority of their patrol time outdoors, working alone in remote areas that are often difficult to reach, traveling on non-traditional vehicles such as snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles, or in 4wd units, to patrol their assigned areas, investigate crimes, and conduct search and rescue missions. They also patrol all the waterways in Massachusetts both coastal and inland using varying size vessels and personal watercraft, often conducting their operations under severe weather conditions.

PROBLEM: Rough environmental settings and a trail of paperwork. The MEP needed a computing solution to stand up to harsh environmental conditions such as snow, extreme cold, moisture, and salt air. MEP officers who travel in vessels such as jet skis or canoes, or in motorized equipment such as mountain bikes, snow mobiles, or ATVs, require extremely rugged equipment that can endure jarring, bumps and hostile weather conditions.

Paperwork and real-time access to critical information was also an issue for the MEP. In the past, paperwork created by the officers followed them all around the state, making high-level data collection and statistical analysis not only difficult, but a very lengthy process, requiring months to complete. In addition, officers weren't able to access information related to vessel or vehicle registrations, mapping, location, emergency situations, crime investigation and more.

ITRONIX SOLUTION: A committee of nine MEP officers worked to evaluate several different mobile computing solutions before making a final decision. They ultimately chose the GoBook MAX due to its superior durability, smaller size, and wireless capabilities. MEP purchased 70 GoBook MAX, with an additional 40 units planned to accommodate the entire MEP force.

"We needed to make sure that the mobile computing system we chose could take a beating, go anywhere, and get soaking wet – while still enabling officers to perform their jobs more timely and efficiently and ultimately better protect the safety of our citizens," said the spokesman for the MEP.

The MEP's fleet of MAXs are connected to a secure law enforcement network using the laptop's internal fixed IP CDMA modem, and services provided by Verizon. Where wireless service is not available officers work offline. Later the officer can connect to the Internet using the MAX's internal modem or they can go to an MEP region office and plug into its network to transfer work to the central office. Each GoBook MAX used by the MEP is loaded with computer aided dispatch (CAD) software provided by Information Management Corporation, that enables officers to remotely access critical information and send data to the central office; Area Nav, from Department of Fish and Game GIS Services, a customized state mapping program that acts as a personal navigation/geographic information system; Delorme Street Atlas; and Microsoft Office. Itronix partnered with TransCOR, to deploy the GoBook MAXs and peripheral equipment, which includes a small pocket jet printer, digital camera, GPS, and mounting apparatus. Due to the variety of vehicles used by the MEP, a degree of ingenuity was required at installation time to structure the most effective configurations for each mode of transportation and to meet the officer's personal needs and work habits.

RESULTS: Efficiency in and out of the field. Now that officers are equipped with state-of-the-art wireless, rugged mobile computing systems, the paper trail that had posed a problem before, has been nearly eliminated. Officers can now file reports and enter information associated with citations, registration offenses, crime scene investigations and more into their GoBook MAX and the data is captured in real-time by the central office. Instead of months to complete statistical analysis, it now requires only days or weeks, even up to the minute, when needed. Likewise, officers can obtain, in real-time, critical information from the FBI, National Crime Information Center (NCIC) and other government agencies to assist in their work.

"With the Itronix solution, our officers are able to be more productive in the field," said the MEP spokesman, "For example, one officer, because he could now check on boat registrations more quickly through the new wireless connectivity, issued 100 citations in one day, compared with 35-40 previously. In the past he would ask a dispatcher in the radio room to look up boat registrations. The dispatcher would work with approx. 20 other officers during a normal shift, reducing the number of checks that could be completed. This improved productivity allows us to spend more time focusing on law enforcement and safety, and reduces the time spent on administrative or manual work."

Another paperless benefit is that before the new system, officers had to lug around nearly 190 paper topology maps in their vehicles. Today all the maps exist on the laptop, making it much more convenient to track geographic information. With safety equipment, life vests, and other gear packed in the officers' vehicles, storage space is a major issue. No longer required to carry numerous paper maps is a welcome change. In addition, the new global positioning and mapping capabilities allows MEP officers to accurately and quickly determine the location of an accident site, accelerating their response time to such incidents. It also provides for the accurate defining of any violations they take actions on - making for a much clearer and legal presentation in court. The need for a hardened, durable system that could withstand the elements and turbulent modes of transportation was one of the primary determinants behind MEP's decision to purchase the Itronix GoBook MAX – and a superior ruggedized system is what they got. "The ultra-rugged GoBook MAX has certainly met our requirements for a laptop that can take a beating and survive the day-to-day hardships of the hostile environments our officers so often work in," said Colonel Richard Murray, Director of the MEP. "It's smaller than the other solutions we looked at, which works well in our vehicles because they tend to have large consoles and less room for a computing system. We've been very happy with the Itronix solution, and feel the officers who were involved in the decision making process made a great selection." said Murray.

DATE: April 2004