



Case Study | Avondale Fire-Rescue

Avondale Fire-Rescue Improves Efficiency and Data Mobility, Monitors Safety at NASCAR Using Emergency Reporting



Company

Avondale Fire-Rescue

Profile

Avondale Fire-Rescue is a highly respected department based in Avondale, Arizona whose mission is to 'provide the highest level of service, including fire, medical and other life safety services to those who reside, work or travel through the City of Avondale.' (www.avondale.org)

Avondale Fire-Rescue strives to be recognized as a role model within the fire service and as an organization that sets the standard for customer service, innovation and professionalism.

Avondale Fire-Rescue protects a population of 77,500 permanent residents. However, twice each year the Phoenix International Raceway (PIR), located in the City of Avondale, hosts a NASCAR race week. During race weeks, Avondale welcomes an additional 100,000 - 150,000 guests, making the PIR the fifth largest city in Arizona during that time.

The Challenge

To ensure safety at each NASCAR week, the fire department sets up an on-site command center for the busiest five days of racing. In order to prepare for the event, the Fire Prevention Division must

assess temporary and permanent building structures, fuel tanks, fireworks displays, pyro displays, propane tanks, grandstands, and the fire protection water supply system.

To accomplish this, the fire department needed a way to track assessments and record permits and other inspection data. Avondale Fire-Rescue was also looking for a solution that would allow them the mobility they needed as they monitored the event.

Additionally, the department wanted a better records management system overall to

assist in the routine operations of the agency.

The Search

Once the department decided to move away from its old system, they began to look for a new solution.

“We wanted to make sure that the system was web-based and that we had the freedom to modify certain aspects of the system to meet our needs. Most importantly, it had to be user friendly and didn’t take a degree in Information Technology to maneuver through,” states Chief Steve Ellsworth of Avondale Fire-Rescue.

According to Chief Ellsworth, they needed a system that could generate reports to assist in managing the department and making budgetary decisions. Functionality wasn’t the only key to choosing a system, however.

“We also looked very closely at the support aspect, something that was lacking in our last system,” states Chief Ellsworth.

Once two vendors were up for consideration, the fire department asked the Fire Prevention Division to evaluate the software. The members of this division weighed in on the importance of system mobility, and the ability to manipulate the database based on the type of information they needed to track.

The Solution

The implementation of Emergency Reporting gave Avondale Fire-Rescue a mobile system that made monitoring incomplete incident reports a snap.

“[It’s] much easier than our previous system to monitor incomplete incident reports. We can get a quick snapshot of the previous day’s activity simply logging in (from anywhere) and looking at the daily log,” states Chief Ellsworth.

“We are required to submit weekly updates to the City Administrators. What used to

take the better part of a day can now be done in a matter of minutes. In addition, we can now produce and evaluate data on Google Maps, which is part of Emergency Reporting,” he says.

Previously, the department kept apparatus and equipment records on a spreadsheet or Word document that was not always current. They also had to rely on the city to provide cost breakdowns on fleet maintenance and those records were not always correct.

Once they made the switch to Emergency Reporting, Avondale Fire-Rescue was able



Photo Courtesy of Avondale Fire-Rescue



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to keep comprehensive records for apparatus and equipment inside the system, including the associated costs for maintenance so they no longer have to rely on the maintenance provider.

The new system also helped improve the department's occupancy management.

"The occupancy module in our previous software was very rigid and didn't allow any flexibility. We input a lot of data and couldn't get the information back out in a useful format. We tried for years to solve those problems to no avail," states Chief Ellsworth.

"With Emergency Reporting we now have the flexibility to set up the occupancy module the way we want it. We can also get the data back out in many useful reports. Our firefighters are just

now beginning to understand how much information they can get in the middle of the night simply by logging on to the on-board laptop," he says.

The system also worked well for the Fire Prevention Division during NASCAR race week, according to Fire Marshal Roger Parker.

"All the permits and inspections are tracked in Emergency Reporting. We use the occupancy module to set up an occupancy for each of the facilities or uses that require a fire code permit and/or inspection," states Fire Marshal Parker.

Plans, specifications and permits are all scanned into Emergency Reporting for reference and the information can be accessed on a tablet in the field.

All the emergency plans are stored for immediate access and the inspectors are also able to use their tablets to take and store digital photos.

"As Fire Marshal I can use ER to manage all the fire prevention activity live as it's happening," states Fire Marshal Parker, "Before we had ER and tablets we carried stacks of paperwork with us in case we needed it. Now we just carry a tablet and have access to ten times the information by using ER."

By implementing Emergency Reporting, Avondale Fire-Rescue has been able to improve efficiency for both the NASCAR races and the departmental day to day operations.

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