

# Florida's Largest County Specifies Siemens Sygnal Mass Communications System

Florida's largest county government represents nearly 2.5 million people. The eighth most populous county in the United States and second largest in Florida covers a land area of 1,946 square miles. The county operates 49 facilities. Tourists from all over the world flock to this vacation spot to visit the famous beaches and Everglades National Park.

## **Client background.**

The county had no reliable mass emergency notification system. It relied on word of mouth spread by telephone calls to inform county employees in 49 facilities of important announcements or impending danger. It could take hours to relay even the simplest message. Equally important, telephone messages often resulted in confusing and potentially serious miscommunications.

## **Client objectives**

Concerned that employees were underserved with conventional telephone relay notifications, the county wanted a way to quickly and reliably communicate through its private branch telephone exchange (PBX), fire alarms and flat screen TVs. However, it needed to install the system in a staged fashion to accommodate schedules and budgets.

## **Siemens Solutions**

The county specified Siemens Sygnal™ Mass Notification System, an expandable and flexible mass communications system that seamlessly integrates into the county's existing networks and buildings. The system not only integrates the important PBX, fire alarm and flat screen communications, it also can pinpoint messages building-by-building.

Eric Balaban, Siemens account manager, audited the county's existing communications system and found that miscommunication was a big problem. The county could not target specific buildings with important information. It was difficult to give one building the all clear while maintaining alerts at other facilities. Installing this system means messages can be focused using the PBX.

Installation is currently underway in three buildings -- a cultural center that houses the county's main library and history and art museums; an administration building; and a central support facility that contains an energy plant, small administration office and a parking garage. As part of the installation, Siemens is offering training sessions to system administrators to quickly learn how to program and operate the Sygnal system.

All communications are hardwired back to a central Sygnal Server for consolidated mass notification command and control. The server allows the county to communicate with a variety of network devices. Additionally, Siemens is helping to configure a master user interface that enables systems administrators to manage all aspects of the emergency communications system. This secure login approach allows for different levels of access, capability and viewership across pre-determined and customizable user rights.

The Sygnal system is flexible and expandable and that was a prerequisite from the county. The county plans to install the system in each of its 49 other facilities in a building block fashion. This will provide enormous flexibility when it comes to budgets and planning.

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