

## **PANEL DISCUSSION: EMERGENCY RESPONSE TECHNOLOGY**

BUSINESS @ NIGHT (CFRA-AM), OTTAWA

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Anchor/Reporters: GREG HEBERT

GREG HEBERT (CFRA): We're going to take a little bit of a departure from the usual business angle right now and focus on emergency preparedness in light of a disaster communications conference going on in Toronto this week.

We're joined on the line right now by Colin Belshaw, who is director of Emergency Response Support with **TELUS** Canada, and Rod Piukkala who is retired Deputy Chief of Police for the Durham Regional Police.

Rod and Colin, thank you both for joining us on the show this evening.

UNIDENTIFIED: Oh our pleasure.

HEBERT: Now, first of all, can you tell me a little bit more about what this conference in Toronto is all about, and perhaps we can start with the **TELUS** angle and then we'll move into how it effects the police.

COLIN BELSHAW (Director, Emergency Response Support, **TELUS** Canada): Well, it's Colin. It's the 16th World Conference on Disaster Management, and we have folks who have been coming in from all over the world to share their learning on the latest in both technology and approaches to dealing with major incidents or disasters. And it's an opportunity for the various people around the world and particularly North America, to share what they're doing, what they're finding most effective in dealing with and preparing for all sorts of incidents that are coming along.

We've had a range of people. This afternoon I spoke to people who'd been involved in the London bombing. We've talked to people who've been involved in local incidents, whether it be from Halifax and hurricanes or flooding in Central Canada, or mud slides in the West. There's quite a range of people, a range of information and interests. It's a great networking and great opportunity to share a lot of information and do a lot of learning.

HEBERT: Now, Colin, we'll get back to you in just a second to talk a little bit more about the technology in particular, but I want to talk to Rod now about how this technology is helping police deal with potential emergencies, or at the very least in your emergency preparedness plan.

ROD PIUKKALA (Retiring Deputy Chief of Police, Durham Regional Police): Oh for sure. I mean, this technology is very important to police and all first responders, police, fire and ambulance. We're the ones that are charged with the responsibility of providing security to communities, businesses, and individuals in a community, and we can't do that without somebody that's providing a service to us, an

enabler, and one of the most important things is communication.

At any given emergency or disaster or whatever it may be, that wreaks havoc on a community or a business or an establishment, you need some sort of communication between somebody who's in charge and all those people that are the field. And that may involve volunteers, it may involve the media, it may involve government, it may involve a myriad of people. Communication is the one thing we cannot do without and it has to be reliable, it has to be private and it has to be security and provided in a timely fashion. Which is most important. You have to be on the ground real quick.

Now back to Colin for a second. Colin, tell me about the technology itself. In particular a very unique truck that can be driven into an emergency zone. It's a proven technology that was used in the wake of Hurricane Katrina disaster in New Orleans. Tell me why this truck is important and what exactly it's capable of doing?

BELSHAW: The truck, and we called them SATCOLTs, I guess at **TELUS** we're known for our animals. The acronym stands for Satellite Cellsite on a back of a Light Truck. And what is it is it's a very rapid deploy mechanism to be able to take communications, in particular communications for police, fire and ambulance right to the scene of whatever's happened.

So in the case of Hurricane Katrina most of the infrastructure, most of the communications towers, cell towers and telephone lines had all been wiped out, and any of the equipment that had been on the ground was generally flooded.

What this allows us to do is to jump in the truck, drive into the location where there's been some sort of a blackout, ice storm, hurricane, any sort of a disaster, and replace the communications, not just with a single line, but with up to a thousand lines of communications, typically within 40 to 60 minutes of having arrived on the scene.

So it allows us to literally establish a high capacity communications network for first responders right at the scene as quickly as we can get there following the incident.

HEBERT: Now, I'm guessing through this truck you can also network a series of mike handsets, and the mike phones are something that I've always found pretty interesting. We use them actually here at CHUM Ottawa and all of our news staff is able to keep in touch with one another at the drop of a hat, and very handy for our reporters and our assignment editors, and I can imagine, Rod, that we would be even more useful devices for police and paramedics and fire fighters and other emergency responders.

PIUKKALA: They are incredible. We have been with **TELUS** at Durham Regional Police since 1999, with a contract, and all our members... all our radio communications is with **TELUS**, and our data communications, and the members all have mike radios that are available to them.

The savings in time are incredible. It allows a lot of officer-to-officer, officer to support person, communication. It doesn't have to go through your communications unit, so you can have a lot more communication between our members as to what's going on without it clogging up a central communications device like a dispatcher or something like that.

So we found this to be incredible. In fact, if you recall back in August of '03 when the lights went out in a great part of northeast United States and Ontario here, our system performed without flaw,

completely. It was a miracle that every single unit was working to its capacity and worked just as it was planned to work.

And I think that was a big benchmark and it was a big test for the system, even though it had been in place for some three or four years. Having seen other, you know, other systems fail, this one, the iDEN system was flawless.

HEBERT: Colin, back to you now for a second. I want to talk about **TELUS's** focus on emergency response support services. It seems that **TELUS** has taken a real initiative here and put a really heavy emphasis on providing these types of services above and beyond what some of your competitors are offering. How has **TELUS** managed to, first of all, corner this market, and do you feel that the competition is catching up to you or do you really have a well-established foothold here?

BELSHAW: That's a difficult question. You're asking me how did I manage to convince my budget-keepers to take a leadership role and make a dramatic investment in the market when no one else was doing it.

I think, you know, at **TELUS** we really believe that we're not just working for **TELUS**, but there's 25,000 of us who are members of the community, and if you add our family members in there's probably a 100,000 of us who live in every community and we've seen right across North America and certainly in other places around the world, that after disasters the thing that usually fails first is the communications. And if we're going to ensure that we're living in safe communities, in places that we can continue to do business and raise our families, we're going to want to make sure that communications systems that our first responders have, are going to work every time. And if they're not what can we get to them to do it.

So it's ... you know, and I'm going to brag **TELUS**. I'm just going to say, we have taken a leadership role in Canada to make dramatic investments in technology. We're making it available to governments at all levels and first responders, and we're inviting them to have us come out with them, when they're doing disaster preparation, when they're having simulations and exercises, and let us come out and prove how this works, let them figure out where we fit in.

If, God forbid we should have a major incident here, so that when something does happen we're ready to roll, they're ready to use us, and we all recover and go back to ordinary life much more quickly.

PIUKKALA: You know, Greg, Colin's hit on an important point there, and that's the exercises and the practicing, and we all learn from that. Every individual agency learns from that, and we've leveraged resources that **TELUS** is providing to us and make it a safer community for people to live in and in Durham Region and anywhere else that they're doing these type of projects.

But we have to practice these things, and we all learn and we all come away from that with a better product, and we all come away better prepared to handle any disaster for a safer Canada.

HEBERT: Fair enough. Colin Belshaw is director of Emergency Response Support for **TELUS** Canada. Rod Piukkala is retiring Deputy Chief of Police for Durham Regional Police.

Thank you both for joining us on Business @ Night. Good luck with the rest of the conference tomorrow and very interesting technology. Best of luck in the future.

PIUKKALA: Thank you. Thanks for inviting me.

BELSHAW: Thanks very much.