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Citizens Work Together with Icom

The South American country of Colombia is well known for its beauty and history, but also for news about its crime rate. According to United Nations Crime Statistics, Colombia had a homicide rate of 53-66 murders per 100,000 people per year in the early part of this decade. Kidnapping, which peaked at 3,572 in 2000 was #1 in the world.

How were the 91,000 police officers nationwide able to cope with this and other crimes? They couldn't do it alone.

In 2004, as a strategy of the democratically elected national government states like Antioquia, whose capital is the famous Medellin, a Citizens Support Network was created to work as volunteers with the police.

"Over 10,000 volunteers in the Citizen Support Network in Antioquia have increased the number of eyes on the street for the police," said Gus Troconis, Icom Sales Manager for Latin America. They are working to help the police minimize crime and the chaos caused by drug dealers."

It's working. Now, the most recent homicide rate nationwide is 36 per 100,000, dropping steadily since 2003. In 2009, the kidnapping rate fell to 172.



"Last year the Citizen Support Network in Antioquia started using their own conventional IDAS™ radio system," said Troconis. "There are 125 municipalities and 29 now have FR5000 VHF IDAS repeaters. The goal is to achieve 100% Icom coverage throughout Antioquia in 3 years."



The Antioquia Police Department needed to migrate the volunteers from a police analog system with 63 repeaters. The IDAS digital/analog system was a perfect choice. So far, the volunteers have 121 F3161D portables and 75 F5061D mobiles, and they can still use their old radios on the new system. Eventually, all the radios will be upgraded to IDAS, at which point analog will have been phased out of use.



"The mobiles are used as base stations at the dispatch centers and in taxicabs around the cities," Troconis said. "They have 1 volunteer in every designated area to help the police. Volunteers also patrol in marked vehicles much like the community patrols in the United States."

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Accessory of the Month

Cases for the F3001/F4001 Series



Check out Icom's 2 new cases for the F3001/F4001 Series portables. You can order either the LCF3000 swivel or NCF3000 clip.

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Two-way radio calls are made by volunteers to the call center so command officers can dispatch an adequate number of resources to a scene for both medical and crime emergencies.

"Improving their communication technology is helping to make police and public safety more effective and efficient." said Troconis.

"The new radios make things easier and faster. We work very closely with the police department communication staff and they especially like the IDAS IP link capability between repeaters and encryption functionality of the system. We trained the police on the new system and the officers train the citizen volunteers."

– **Gus Troconis**, Icom Sales Manager for Latin America

The strategic alliances with the national government and municipal authorities, public and private partner-



ships, monitoring services and private security, community action boards and leaders, and the Citizen's Support Network, supported by a communication system in Antioquia, is becoming a model for other states in the country.

The environment is still a dangerous place but with the help of volunteers in the Citizen's Support Network they are directly on the line working with police to defeat crime in their country. They are gaining success. And Icom is right along side with them, supporting their efforts.

Enhanced MDC: Simple Solution to a Complex Problem

At a time when security and location tracking are becoming increasingly important, Enhanced MDC (EMDC) provides organizations a simple, cost-effective solution for integrating automatic vehicle location (AVL), short text messaging and remote diagnostics into a traditional two-way radio system.

Icom engineers developed EMDC as an update to the classic MDC 1200 signaling protocol. It offers all the same features as MDC 1200 — call alert, radio check, PTT ID/Caller ID, selective call, stun/receive, status, group calls and emergency and audio frequency shift



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keying — in addition to free-form short text messaging up to 48 characters, AVL and remote diagnostics.

Enhanced MDC offers many of the same features as a trunking system at a significantly lower cost, says Dale Scholten of General Communications in Grand Rapids. “It provides private radio-to-radio paging,” he says. “Users can carry on private conversations with another radio. With EMDC, Icom is able to provide many of same features as trunking. It is a simple solution to a complex problem.”

Scholten has steered several local school districts toward EMDC with good success, including Allendale Public Schools in suburban Grand Rapids. Allendale Public Schools selected an EMDC system because it offered AVL and automatic personnel location, which help the district ensure the safety of children and respond quickly in emergency situations.

“The schools needed to transmit lockdown code to the administration staff,” Scholten says. “Their primary need was public safety — to alert administration staff silently. With EMDC, users can see ‘lockdown’ on their individual display and take the appropriate action. They can also see the user who initiated lockdown.”

EMDC is an ideal solution for businesses and organizations wanting GPS location and texting capabilities but not requiring a full trunking system. In addition to enhancing safety and security, EMDC systems can also increase operational efficiency and lower operating costs by allowing a business or organization to track personnel and streamline delivery and transportation services.

Backwards compatible with MDC 1200, users can introduce new EMDC radios into an existing radio system without making older radios obsolete. The signaling protocol is currently offered in the Icom F70 series portable and F1721 series mobile radio.

EMDC requires Icom radios with EMDC, one Icom radio with EMDC used as a dispatch station, and a Windows® PC with Icom or authorized third-party EMDC software installed at the dispatch console. It supports multiple mapping vendors and users can simultaneously interface to multiple mapping programs.

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