



VIRTUALAGILITY, IBM COMPLETE PRECEDENT-SETTING EMERGENCY SERVICES INSTALLATION FOR STATE OF MISSOURI

BOSTON, December 2007 --Working with 14 governmental departments and two federal agencies, VirtualAgility and IBM recently completed a project that has transformed Missouri's ability to cope with natural and man-made disasters.

VirtualAgility OPS Center (VOC) is the heart of a new system that enables Missouri's many public safety agencies to function as one in a crisis. In fact, these agencies can now use a single platform to assess dangers, make joint contingency plans, respond swiftly and with coordination, and then recover effectively, recording lessons learned in order to do even better next time.

The system is called MERIS, the Missouri Emergency Response Information System. Its genesis was the decision made by Missouri officials that efficient disaster response was impossible using traditional tools and thinking.

According to MERIS Assistant IT Director, Larry Lueckenhoff, "Missouri has superb agencies and deep expertise. But much of that capability cannot be brought to bear without the means to integrate the activity of groups that are using totally different systems and different plans."

These are the same conclusions that federal officials reached when evaluating failures in the wake of 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina.

David Finch of the Missouri Department of Public Safety said that the VirtualAgility OPS Center correlated more closely than other solutions to the challenges they had identified. "It boiled down to this," Finch said, "Plans. Communications. And situational awareness."

Here's how response will unfold now. Managers at the EOC will be able to alert and coordinate whatever agencies and units are required to deal with a given threat. Key personnel can be located instantly. Interagency plans developed on the VOC platform are available electronically to everyone with permission and updated in real time as they are being used.

And that's just the beginning. Information, resources and tools can be assembled in advance or on the fly and made available to responder teams via an ad hoc network that cuts across jurisdictional boundaries. Even better, teams don't receive general plans; each sees specific tasks bundled with whatever resources are needed to complete the job at hand.

Managers have minute-by-minute awareness of what's happening throughout the disaster zone. Information flows freely through tools that responders already know how to use. Most important, perhaps, managers and responders are using the same system that they planned on and trained on. With plans in place, perfect inter-agency communications and a clear view of the action, the Missouri organization will be well prepared to succeed under any conditions.

"We hope that other states will benefit by what we've learned and done here," said Finch. "In the final analysis, what we needed was obvious. The problem was finding technology that could help us achieve real interoperability and give us full situational awareness. VirtualAgility and IBM provided it. We're enthusiastic about the innovative technologies that were brought together for this pioneering approach to Emergency Services."

About VirtualAgility

VirtualAgility continues to apply its robust line of WorkCenter solutions to the needs for improved situational awareness and coordination within and among agencies to organize, plan and track mitigation, preparation, response and recovery activities. To achieve the next level of virtual agility, collaboration and information sharing, VirtualAgility can be laid over existing "stovepipe" solutions without disrupting day-to-day operations. VirtualAgility WorkCenter delivers easy- to-use, quick-to-install SOA solutions for creating interoperability and business continuity in government and industry.

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