

The event of the year

It may only be January but thoughts are already turning to the BAPCO Show in April, to be held at the Islington Design Centre in London. Last year's show attracted over 1,000 visitors and over 120 exhibitors from across the emergency service, Local Authorities and Government departments concerned with contingency planning and resilience. Dan Worth reports.



"The BAPCO show is always something we attend because there is always lots on display, lots to see, and plenty of opportunity to tell people about what we do and how we can help them."

David Green,
Director of Public
Safety, Arqiva.

As well as the show there will be two days of varied and important conference talks covering everything from the challenges of the 2012 Olympics to the rise of satellite communications and the ever-popular BAPCO dinner on the Tuesday night. Hugely successful and inspirational paralympic athlete Dame Tanni Grey-Thompson is the keynote speaker prior to the dinner, and after dinner events include a comedian and a casino.

A word from Ken Mott, Executive Director, BAPCO

"The 2009 BAPCO Conference is the 10th anniversary of the launch of the conference and exhibition and during those ten years public safety services and civil contingency has faced many challenges, challenges that could well be exacerbated in the current downturn.

"Therefore promoting interoperability and the sharing of information for planning across civil contingency response authorities, "blue light" emergency services and related agencies is a crucial requirement for improving public safety/civil contingency services delivery. With this in mind the BAPCO conference is designed for emergency services professionals and all practitioners involved in the provision and use of communications and information management technologies in civil contingencies/emergency incidents.

"A new dual stream conference format for 2009 will deliver more variety and a greater choice of topics and sessions for practitioners to choose from as well as a more educational focus (delegates will receive a certificate confirming their attendance at this key learning event).

"The parallel sessions are Resilient Communications, Communications Centres, Next Generation Networks and Operational Data. Emergency services professionals will be able to explore how technology, both current and emerging can assist in meeting the ever changing user

requirements, increased inter-agency communications and demands for a service that requires resilient systems and established protocols for information sharing in the event of civil emergencies and incidents."

Views from the exhibition floor

Arqiva will be exhibiting at the show and David Green, Director of Arqiva's Public Safety group, underlines the importance they place on making sure they are there.

One area Arqiva will be emphasising is the use of TETRA by emergency planning officers and local government. Green explains: "We have access to spectrum which can be used by those who need resilient communications at a critical time – not just emergency planning officers but also those in mission critical infrastructure areas like the utilities and nuclear power generation."

Exhibiting for the first time at the BAPCO Show will be Sure Business – a trading name for Cable and Wireless International. The company will be demonstrating mobile SIM card products that operate across all the UK networks, ensuring that users always stay connected. Simon Last-Sutton from Sure says: "For people working in high-risk jobs, or on their own, such as probation officers, gas utility workers, police community officers and so on, these phones offer the guarantee of being able to find any signal on any network if it's available. This gives those in the public safety sector increased security for themselves and for the public at large. The risk of needing to make a call and finding the phone has no signal is drastically reduced." The technology is known as Strongest Signal Roaming (SSR).

Excelerate, a supplier of satellite and wireless-based data, voice and video solutions, will be demonstrating a number of recently completed vehicles outside the BAPCO 2009 main entrance. Visitors will see what a multi agency command village might look like at a large scale incident, and how interoperability can be delivered.

The vehicles on display will include the 15-ton major incident command unit belonging to Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service that uses the same common platform as the HART vehicle and is configured to allow greater on board conferencing.

Another innovation on display will be ECMS (Excelerate Communications Management System), a powerful solution developed by Excelerate Technology to provide satellite and GSM-based VoIP (Voice over IP) PBX switching functionality. This enables commanders to use VoIP handsets as fully featured extensions of any HQ-based PBX and use the mobile satellite links to route calls under normal conditions when the vehicle is stationary.



Significantly, ECMS also enables different voice devices including UHF and VHF radios, mobile and VoIP phones to be patched into each other as well as providing real-time voice recording of all voice channels.

Fortek – dinner sponsor

One of the aspects of the BAPCO Show that is always popular is the dinner held to mark the opening of the show. This year, for the second time in a row, Fortek is sponsoring the dinner. "Sponsoring the dinner is something we are always very happy to do because we think it's such an important part of the show," commented Louise Godliman, Client Services Director. "The conferences and exhibition are both very informative and useful but the dinner is great way for people to be able to have an informal chat about issues in the industry, network and let their hair down and have some fun as well."

QlikTech is appearing for the first time at this year's BAPCO show and its public sector team is already looking forward to it, said MD Andy Honess.

QlikTech is already making progress in the public sector and 2009 looks set to be a busy year. Guests from Devon and Cornwall Police, Gwent Police and the NHS will be on hand to explain the benefits of the services QlikTech provide – the stand promises to be very interesting.

These services primarily concern providing business

intelligence and performance management software that can handle everything from crime records to HR data to financial systems for management purposes.

SunGard Public Sector has been attending BAPCO since its inception and the association's annual exhibition and conference is always the first marketing event in the schedule. David White, Marketing Manager at SunGard said: "For us BAPCO is a 'must attend' event. It allows us to introduce new products and features, update our current customers, meet new prospects and network with other competitors, partners and suppliers and because of that it's a very healthy show."

This year SunGard has launched a new version of the DS2000 ICCS known as the DS2000 Compact. It is aimed at the smaller control room and is suitable for new entrants to the market, such as port authorities, rail networks, industrial plants and local authorities in addition to smaller operations within traditional blue light agencies.

Matthew Palmer, Product Manager for the DS200C is convinced that this new version of the market leading DS2000 is destined for great things. "The DS200C is designed for smaller operations and control rooms and will allow operators to easily patch between different technologies simply by using the touch-screen interface." SunGard will also be featuring their Event Management solution and a new multi-media management solution aimed primarily at the police.



First time exhibitor Sure Business will demonstrate its Strongest Signal Roaming technology, which chooses the best coverage on any mobile network in the UK, be it Vodafone, O2, T Mobile or Orange.