

Case History

Hudson County Emergency Alert Sirens

Since many officials view Hudson County as the first line of defense for the New York metropolitan area, the county is now installing an emergency warning system to alert and notify the public to major emergencies. In early September, the county awarded the emergency warning system contract to Kevco Electric, Co. of Bloomfield, New Jersey, and Acoustic Technology, Inc. (ATI) of Boston, Massachusetts. The cost of this contract is provided by a 2006 Homeland Security contract.

The emergency warning system consists of 31 electronic, high-powered sirens that provide warning tones and voice messages. ATI designed the system to provide a warning signal followed by pre-recorded messages to alert and advise the residents of Hudson County. Many of these sirens are placed outside transportation hubs like Hoboken Terminal, at Exchange Place in Jersey City, at the Port Imperial ferry terminal in Weehawken, and in other highly populated areas of the county.

The system will utilize wireless radio frequency communication to activate the sirens from two independent control centers. One will act as the primary control center, and the other as a backup. The system utilizes a high-security communication scheme to prevent unauthorized activation.

The ATI acoustic model and sophisticated GIS technology are used to select siren locations that will provide adequate coverage in the county's most populated areas. Each siren is equipped with DC power to avoid using AC power, which is subject to failure. To go green and be environment-friendly, the county is using a solar power charging system. Because the system is optimized to limit public exposure to excessive noise, it meets both FEMA and OSHA requirements.

Kevco, ATI, and Hudson County officials are working together to ensure successful implementation of the project, which is was completed in January 2009.