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## Charlottesville Disconnects MDT's, Picks Up New iPad

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**Virginia** - The Charlottesville (Va.) Fire Department is replacing the mobile data terminals in all of its vehicles with iPads. One of the problems we have with the traditional mobile data computer is that it is delayed you have to log in ... and that doesn't work when you have to respond immediately to calls, Chief Charles Werner told Urgent Communications, a FIRE CHIEF sister publication.

The idea for the migration came from the department's rank and file, who asked to deploy Active911, an app that delivers alarm, incident and route information. Active911's mapping function tracks responders — both apparatus and personnel — in real time, and it displays the location of fire hydrants. In addition, clicking on map icons allows firefighters to access basic building information and download large files, such as floor plans.

Former volunteer firefighter Joseph Sullivan created the app and today is Active911's president. Sullivan's department used text messages to let them know when an alarm had sounded. One big problem was that his iPhone often listed the texts as coming from what appeared to be a random number that Sullivan didn't recognize, so he didn't respond to the call.

"It was like my buddy was texting me ... it wasn't like an alarm," he said.

An even bigger problem was that the texts often didn't arrive in time.

"Once, I showed up at the fire station as someone was washing down the truck," Sullivan said. "I said, 'What's going on? Why isn't everyone jumping on the truck? We have a fire to go to.' He said, 'That was an hour ago.' I thought that I could build a service that was better than this."

Users must be registered for the fee-based Active911 service. Pricing is tiered based on the size of the department. Small departments — those with five or fewer users — pay nothing. Larger departments pay \$10 per subscriber annually, and volume discounts are available for very large departments. Werner said that his department will pay about \$750 for its annual subscription.

Written by Glenn Bischoff

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