



Interoperability Unleashed

How Southern Linc bridged LMR and LTE to unify public safety communications in Georgia

Technology at Its Tipping Point

Imagine a county deputy speeding down a highway, blue lights flashing, in hot pursuit of a suspect. Using his land mobile radio (LMR), he relays information to dispatch and his fellow troopers about the suspect's whereabouts. But as he approaches the next county, he's unable to communicate directly with the officers waiting ahead—different jurisdiction, different LMR radio system.

For decades, first responders across Georgia have faced challenges stemming from disparate LMR systems. Private LMR networks were initially preferred for public safety because they're purpose-built for mission critical communications, ostensibly offering a high level of reliability, security and control.

However, the limitations of LMR radio were becoming harder to ignore—limited to no data capabilities, outdated technology, geographical limitations, and fragmented systems with no interoperability between agencies. The governor's office wanted to solve these issues, but replacing private networks across Georgia appeared to be an expensive and logistically challenging proposition.

The Vision: One Device, Many Connections

For years, Southern Linc has partnered with state and local agencies to provide mission critical LTE service and public-sector grade push-to-talk. But oftentimes, Southern Linc served as a backup network in the event that the primary LMR system failed due to geographical limitations or an outage.

Initially, the governor's office was seeking an LTE solution that could connect Georgia State Patrol throughout the state, but Southern Linc imagined an even better solution. What if a single handset could bridge these private LMR networks with LTE? Three years ago, the idea finally came to fruition.

Instead of pushing state agencies to sunset their legacy LMR systems, Southern Linc found a way to expand their usefulness, while adding modern, nationwide capabilities. A single device with two modes—a seamless switch from LMR to LTE with military-grade security intact.

The Turning Point

Partnering with L3Harris and Catalyst Communications Technologies, Southern Linc developed and launched the technology solutions that would power interoperable communications across Georgia:

L3Harris LMR-LTE handsets

These purpose-built devices delivered the form factor that first responders need, complete with familiar knobs, rugged reliability and noise-cancellation technology. In addition to these portables, L3Harris offered an installed vehicle solution with single-band and multiband LMR and LTE.



Catalyst Interworking Solutions

Through this partnership, Southern Linc helped develop and certify Catalyst Propulsion™, a state-of-the-art dispatch console solution with interoperable LMR and LTE, built to serve as a command-and-control center for state agencies.

The result was a system that expanded radio communications by thousands of miles, enabled interagency coordination and delivered new capabilities via a single, secure handset.

“It was a complete gamechanger on the technology front,” said David Keith, Director of Sales and Marketing at Southern Linc. “Agencies didn’t have to rip out and replace their existing technology—and these handsets delivered something better than anyone else had in the marketplace.”

Why Georgia Chose Southern Linc

The state had been evaluating options for years. With 159 counties and around 50 different systems, coverage gaps were constant. Georgia State Patrol started looking for a better solution. They toured North Carolina and Tennessee, reviewing carrier proposals and weighing the costs.

Major carriers faced significant challenges connecting disparate radio systems, such as bringing devices and towers up to code and spec for state requirements, a costly and time-consuming initiative.

Southern Linc's reputation was already well-established in Georgia. Storm after storm, event after event, Southern Linc had proven itself. With network redundancy well above the industry standard, a full LTE portfolio, nationwide roaming agreements, and a rollout timeline that aligned with urgent needs, Southern Linc emerged as the clear choice of carrier.

A Statewide Movement

The governor's office selected Southern Linc to integrate private radio networks via their CriticalLinc™ LTE network. Utilizing LMR to LTE interoperability, the initiative began with Georgia State Patrol, then expanded rapidly across state agencies—Georgia Department of Public Safety, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Georgia Forestry Commission, Georgia's Department of Homeland Security, and the Georgia Emergency Management Agency. Additionally, numerous local police, sheriff's and fire departments, along with city governments, have adopted the enhanced public safety network solution.

Key Features Highlighted:



Nationwide push-to-talk through roaming partnerships



Secure handsets with an intuitive form factor and user experience



Catalyst's console bridging dispatch, 911 services and statewide networks



Over-the-air provisioning and interoperability between counties

Results in Action

The benefits of statewide interoperability have already proven themselves in real-world emergencies, and the potential applications continue to grow:

Hurricane Helene: Agencies coordinated evacuation routes, power restoration and emergency response in real time.

Criminal Pursuits: Troopers have communicated seamlessly across jurisdictions, leading to the apprehension of criminal suspects.

Wildfire Preparedness: Forestry teams can maintain constant contact, improving situational awareness and safety.

Unified Command: A police colonel in North Georgia can monitor an incident at the state capital, hundreds of miles away.

Looking Ahead

For the first time, Georgia's public safety agencies aren't working around communications gaps. They're leading with a solution that sets a national precedent. What began as a technical vision has become a trusted statewide network. With Southern Linc's proven reliability, the foundation is in place for whatever challenges lie ahead.