

# MPSTOC, Fairfax, Virginia, US

Barco opens the way towards close multi-agency cooperation

“Barco’s unique networked visualization concept really opens the way towards multi-agency collaboration, thereby enabling faster decision-making and quicker response times.”

Howard Schlieper, Vice-President,  
Polysonics

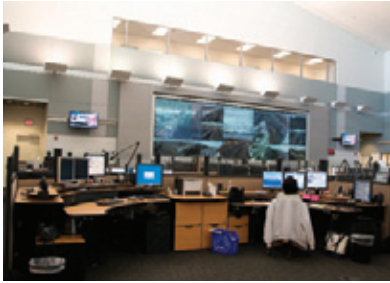


A state-of-the-art facility that bundles multiple public safety, transportation and emergency management partners under one roof, that was the dream of Elaine McConnell, an ambitious Springfield District Supervisor (US) who fought to enhance security in her region since the 2001 terrorist attacks. In October 2008, McConnell saw that dream come true, with the inauguration of the 114,000 square foot McConnell Public Safety and Transportation Operations Center (MPSTOC). MPSTOC, which is rightly called one of the most technologically advanced facilities of its kind, boasts a unique audio/visual infrastructure, with six large-format video walls at its very heart.

By mid-2009, the brand-new MPSTOC building should be fully occupied. Once all the agencies concerned have relocated to there, it will house the Fairfax County Department of Public Safety Communications (9-1-1 call center incl. Police and Fire Dispatching); the Fairfax County Office of Emergency Management (incl. the county’s Emergency Operations Center); the Virginia Department of State Police Division Seven Communications Center and the Virginia Department of Transportation’s (VDOT) Operations Center, making it one of the few places in the world where county and state 9-1-1, transportation and emergency management partner agencies, etc. work so closely together. An additional 33,000 square-foot forensic facility attached to the PSTOC houses the Fairfax County Police Department’s Investigative Support Division.

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### Complex multi-agency project

The MPSTOC project is a very ambitious and complex one, as it brings together numerous county and state stakeholders with distinct requirements and visions. Despite the challenges, the center was finished on time and on budget, thanks to the great project management of both the clients (Fairfax County and the Commonwealth of Virginia) and the consultants. One of the consultants was Polysonics, an expert in acoustics and technology solutions. Polysonics provided design consulting, bid documentation and construction administration services for MPSTOC. Part of its task included the selection of a visualization solution.

### Stitch-screen technology

"As design consultants, we try to know all the technologies on today's market and choose the technology that best meets our customer's requirements," said Howard Schlieper, Vice-President of Polysonics. "Barco offers a superb visualization concept whereby all video and data are available via the network for all operators, whether or not they are in the same control room. Moreover, they have a unique stitch-screen technology, thereby ensuring a seamless gap between the displays, which quickly won us over."

### Unique streaming video offering

"The visualization solution is also exceptionally strong when it comes to streaming video," Schlieper continued. "Barco users testified that the streaming video card in Barco's TransForm A Controller allows the simultaneous processing of a multitude of streaming video signals from different manufacturers with different compression schemes in real time, with



minimal latency and loss-less compression. This is very important to MPSTOC as the center is responsible for cross-agency collaboration for all of Northern Virginia. With this ability, MPSTOC can support up to and beyond the 300 traffic cameras used across the entire Northern Virginia area. Barco's ability to scale and support such large signal counts and its flexibility for universal decoding made Barco's solution a great choice for MPSTOC."

### Impressive support and flexibility

More than the Barco solution, it was also Barco's professional, responsive and flexible approach that won Polysonics over. Steve Boudreau, Design Consultant: "From our very first talks until right now, after the commissioning, Barco is always ready to help us. Whenever we have a question or a problem, we can pick up the phone, talk to their people and get support in no time. They are never back pedaling, and that's really exceptional in large-sized projects like MPSTOC. They only have one thing in mind: a satisfied end-user."

### Blending in with the room

The Polysonics-designed systems include six rear-projection video walls with DLP technology. At the operations floor, five large video walls display information to the Police (two 2x2 67" cube walls) and Fire and Rescue (two 2x2 67" cube walls) dispatch personnel and the VDOT operators (one 2x5 80" cube wall). The Emergency Operations Center (EOC) has a very large wall consisting of ten 80" cubes, in a 2x5 configuration. "Ergonomics were key during the design phase and Barco has made sure its video walls perfectly blend in with the aesthetics of the rooms.

The wall has been installed at an ideal height, as designed by HOK Architects, so that operators have the best possible image when they sit or stand up. Indeed, the unusual brightness and wide viewing angles ensure that everyone has a good view, even in an extreme left or right corner," Boudreau added.

### Mission-critical environment

"The MPSTOC building has been engineered in such a way that its key parts can withstand most disasters, so that the safety operators can help the region's residents even in the worst of catastrophes," Howard Schlieper continued. "Redundancy was therefore a major point of focus for the audio and visual systems. Besides the video walls, we have installed flat panel displays around the operations floor where all data can be viewed. So when one system goes down, there's always an alternative. The same goes for the networks. Barco itself also equipped its systems with a couple of handy redundancy features, like the dual-lamp system. On top of that, we have complete trust in the reliability of Barco's solutions."

### Collaboration and decision-making

While shared facilities have become more common over the past few years, the level of operational integration between Fairfax County and the Commonwealth of Virginia is unmatched. By consolidating all agencies and functions into one building, MPSTOC wishes to enhance public safety, transportation and emergency management services in their region. "Barco truly helps them achieve that objective. All staff at the operations floor can observe, gather data and stay updated on incident statuses. In this way they gain advanced control capabilities over the operating environment, both at an agency and cross-agency level, as they are able to display information from other agencies if required. Barco's unique networked visualization concept really opens the way towards multi-agency collaboration, thereby enabling faster decision-making and quicker response times," Schlieper concluded.

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