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CUSTOM ALERTS TORNADO AREAS OF MAXIMUM IMPACT BLIZZARD REAL-TIME HIGH WINDS FLOODS PRECIPITATION TIMING PATENTED TOOLS
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MXVISION WEATHERSENTRY®

CASE STUDY

CITY OF LONGBOAT KEY

LONGBOAT KEY, FLORIDA

Longboat Key is a barrier island community that stretches for 12 miles along the west coast of Florida. It lies just north of Sarasota, with the Gulf of Mexico to the west and Sarasota Bay along the island's east shore. With 8,000 permanent residents, Longboat's population grows to approximately 20,000 during peak season, as tourists and snowbirds come to enjoy all the warmth, beauty, and recreation the island has to offer.

THE CHALLENGE

Without question, hurricanes are the most serious weather concern on Longboat Key. Because barrier islands typically take the full brunt of these ferocious storms, Longboat Key will normally evacuate if it's in the path of any hurricane, regardless of its size or strength. Public safety officials on Longboat also need to monitor more common thunderstorms, lightning, and occasional waterspouts that may pose a risk to island residents or local marine traffic.

THE DTN/METEORLOGIX SOLUTION

To help protect the community, Longboat Key selected the MxVision WeatherSentry® *Public Safety Edition* from DTN/Meteorlogix. "We keep it in our dispatch center," explained Steve Decker, communications supervisor for the city.

"Our six dispatchers are trained to use the system, I have it on my desktop and the fire chief and chief of police can pull it up on their computers as well. In dispatch, we have the system programmed to alert us whenever we have severe weather approaching our corridor. When we see it, we can notify our marine patrolmen and fire department. And if it's really bad, we'll alert the town manager, the police, and administration as well."

RESULTS

Decker is the primary MxVision WeatherSentry *Public Safety Edition* user in Longboat Key, routinely relying on the system to issue travel advisories and evacuation notices. "Because we're a barrier island, we don't want to get caught out here," he said. "This system shows us everything we need to see concerning the storm. The information has been very reliable in terms of surge, projected paths, and the arrival and tracking of the storms. It gives us enough time to get the word out."

While the system is most valuable during the hurricane season (which lasts from June to November), Decker also finds it very useful for less significant—but still dangerous—weather events. Waterspouts (weak, short-lived tornadoes over water) are a good example.



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“We do get waterspouts from time to time. They develop and pass over quickly and they’re gone before the TV news gets it. With the MxVision WeatherSentry *Public Safety Edition* we’ll see it actually coming and be able to do something about it. We let our marine officer know if he’s out on the water, we’ll let our patrols and our fire department personnel know that a water spout is heading our direction.” The warning allows marine officers to come into port or steer away from the water spout — timely, evasive action that isn’t possible with TV news coverage.

Decker said that community leaders and citizens throughout Longboat Key have become well aware of the system and are very supportive. “It’s well advertised. Town commissioners and other visitors in the dispatch center have heard about the system and want to see it. We point out some of MxVision WeatherSentry *Public Safety Edition*’s capabilities, because it has some neat features. It makes the center more up to date—it rounds us out.”

Recently, they add the online version of the product, which offers expanded access to real-time weather information, to their weather solution.

THE CLIENT’S VIEW

“MxVision WeatherSentry *Public Safety Edition* is showing us everything we need to know about a storm, and it’s giving us time to get the word out. It’s been a good investment — without a doubt.”

Steve Decker, communications supervisor, City of Longboat Key

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