



CASE STUDY:

Joshua Tree National Park Utilizes Satellite Equipment for Emergency Communications

The Situation

Located in Twentynine Palms, California and comprising parts of the Mojave and Sonoran Deserts, Joshua Tree National Park is a popular destination for hiking, camping, biking and backpacking. Spanning nearly 800,000 acres, the park is a three-hour drive from LA and San Diego and attracts approximately 1.3 million visitors annually.



The Challenge

Like many national parks, visitors to Joshua Tree frequently spend their time camping, climbing boulders and exploring trails – which consequently can lead to accidents and injuries throughout the park.

Although park rangers patrol the park 24/7, with elevations in the park ranging from a low of 536 feet to a high of 5,814 feet, the mountainous terrain and remote location of the park allow for very limited cell phone reception, if any at all. In addition, given the size of the park, it is impossible for the rangers to be accessible to all areas at once.

Joshua Tree park rangers needed a way to quickly respond to emergencies and communicate with visitors and other public safety personnel in a timely manner.

The Solution

KR Nida Communications, a commercial radio dealer of interoperable products for public safety customers, realized the critical need for providing park goers with quick and easy access to the park rangers and emergency services.

Using SkyTerra's MSAT-G2 mobile satellite radio transceiver unit, a solar panel and a battery, KR Nida modified a standard emergency call box phone so that visitors can make calls to emergency responders if they are in trouble.



Callers simply lift the receiver and the phone auto dials the sheriff's office, which in turn dispatches the information to the park rangers. The use of satellite equipment ensures park visitors have a reliable communications method in case of an accident and can quickly and easily contact public safety personnel.

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"In an emergency situation, it's critical to know that the call box will work and someone will be on the other end," said Alberto Casanova, Operations Manager for KR Nida. "We chose to use SkyTerra's satellite equipment, because it is 100 percent reliable and provides us an added degree of certainty."



Currently the park has one satellite-enabled emergency call box located in a heavy traffic area, with plans to install a second later in 2010.

Because of KR Nida's creative use of satellite technology, Joshua Tree's park rangers now have a reliable and simple means of communicating with each other during an emergency and visitors have an added level of assurance that they can communicate with someone in the event of an emergency.