Icom Wins NYC Transit Order for Close To 9000 F70 Series Radios

As part of their goal to build a “state-of-the-art communication-based signal system to replace the mechanical signals dating to 1904,” NYC Transit is now using a custom system of more than 8,800 Icom F70 radios to manage fleet-wide communications across their train, subway and bus system.

With 47,000 employees working a network that covers more than 5,000 square miles, and using 734 train stations, efficient communication is the lifeblood of a system that 8 million passengers in all five New York boroughs and surrounding counties each day.

The RFP went out last year, and the competition was tough, but the requirements were even tougher.

“NYC Transit needed nearly 9,000 radios, each customized for the operator who was using it,” reports Chris Lougee, Vice President of Icom America Inc. “Beyond that, they needed things like custom firmware, custom circuit boards that could be swapped, a database allowing them to track every radio and even engraving on the hardware itself. All of which they wanted to be able to maintain themselves and train people on, which meant the winning bid would also be creating training manuals and teaching NYC Transit’s own technicians how to physically maintain the hardware.”

In December 2010, Icom delivered 8,825 of these highly customized packages to NYC Transit. Each package contained: an engraved radio, belt clip, antenna, charger, extra extended life battery, noise cancelling speaker microphone, adjustable shoulder strap, and a user manual. All the equipment is intrinsically safe, each serial number is part of a customized database enabling them to track each radio and all of them include safety features like a man-down function. And, as requested, Icom will be training NYC Transit’s technicians to repair the radios, as well as providing spare parts and 300 printed circuit boards for swapping.

“This is what we do, it’s what makes Icom special,” explains Lougee. “We are a big enough company that we can deliver top-of-the-line equipment at a competitive price. But we’re also nimble enough that we can customize any aspect of an order to meet a client’s unique needs. Further, because so many of our operations are domestic, we have relationships with vendors who can do everything from engraving to custom leather carrying cases. That’s what makes us different.”

“Because of our relationships and attention to detail, we’ve seen clients create systems that seemed out of their reach just a short time ago. It’s very rewarding for us to be able to do this.”

— Chris Lougee, Icom America Vice President
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Indeed, as big as this project was, it is right in line with what Icom has done for clients all over the world, in both the public and the private sector. Icom has put together similar packages for the public and private sector alike: The US Army and Marine Corps, the Afghan National Police, Iraqi Minister of the Interior, the US National Park Service and JC Penney, among others.

The NYC Transit project, as many of Icom’s projects have been lately, is geared towards migrating existing communication systems to meet or exceed the FCC’s narrowband regulations that go into effect in 2013. These new radios not only meet the narrowband standards, but are interoperable with existing legacy systems and upgradable to P25 digital in the future. This makes it possible for organizations of all sizes to upgrade at a pace that is feasible while building a system that will last well into the digital future.

Interoperability with an eye to the future is a hallmark of Icom equipment, which is also used by Amtrak and other AAR carriers like BNSF, CSX and other major transport companies.

“This is a great time for all of us,” says Lougee. “The switch to greater efficiency is an obvious win for operators, and because of our relationships and attention to detail, we’ve seen clients create systems that seemed out of their reach just a short time ago. It’s very rewarding for us to be able to do this.”