

CASE STUDY

# Pinellas County, Florida Emergency Communications Delivered Uninterrupted Life-Saving Services During Category 5 Hurricane

## Industry

Public Sector

## Challenge

Maintain 100% uptime for emergency systems during extreme weather, natural disasters, terrorist attacks, and other dangerous conditions

## Results

- Handled 3x the call volume with no outages or latency during a recent Category 5 storm
- Kept citizens and first responders safe with coordinated communications and warnings
- Prioritized rescue missions and delivery of critical goods and services

## Products

- Rocket® MultiValue Application Platform

## Application

Emergency Management Services

## Organization

Pinellas County in the Gulf Coast of Florida is home to nearly 950,000 Floridians in major cities such as St. Petersburg, Clearwater, and Palm Harbor. As the Primary Public Safety Answering Point, the Pinellas County Emergency Communications department is responsible for processing all 911 calls.

## Challenge

On any given day, staff handle nearly 2,000 emergency calls from Pinellas County's more than 3,500 citizens per square mile. Nonstop system uptime, near-instantaneous response times, and perfect coordination with field staff are critical. Maintaining anything less than 100 percent operability during a wide-scale disaster is not an option.

In September 2017, Category 5 Hurricane Irma, with anticipated 140 mile-per-hour winds and torrential rainfall, challenged the county to provide uninterrupted life-saving services. To meet the expected spike in demand, the county doubled its emergency call center personnel from 20 to 40 before Irma made landfall. As projected, the volume of 911 calls tripled to nearly 6,000 on the day of the hurricane, and remained high for days. Staff needed to ensure that systems remained operational — without extended latency or outages — so dispatchers could coordinate first responders across 70 fire stations and 400 fire trucks to quickly reach citizens in distress.

## Solution

The county runs several systems built on the Rocket® MultiValue (MV) Application Platform, including the dispatching system for its fire stations and trucks. In addition, the county uses a custom application built on Rocket technology that allows first responders to report the state of the weather in their jurisdictions. Called Storm Impressions, the application enables emergency responders to know precisely which areas are impacted, and quickly deliver aid to where it's needed most.



Pinellas County deployed its first MV applications more than 25 years ago. The county chose Rocket MV for its dual function as both an embedded database and development platform, offering traditional database management with the flexibility, innovation, and performance developers need. Ideal for high transaction-processing applications, Rocket MV powers the Pinellas County dispatch system, as well as the Storm Impressions application used by field personnel. With a long history of strong performance within the county before the 2017 hurricane season, staff were confident that both they and their systems could handle the pressure.

## Results

Despite the 3x increase in crisis call volume, the county's MV applications maintained 100 percent uptime. The Rocket MV applications delivered 500-millisecond response times, enabling emergency staff (who monitor up to 10 screens simultaneously) to rapidly identify and address residents' needs. First responders could quickly enter initial damage assessments, support priority dispatch protocols, and identify geocode structural issues to maintain jurisdictional boundaries. Explained Jacqueline Weinreich, Director of Radio and Technology for the County, "During Hurricane Irma, all our Rocket MultiValue applications performed flawlessly. The Rocket solution never faltered and in fact was instrumental in helping the county provide support and relief efforts to our citizens during this crisis."


Pinellas County and its emergency personnel operated under some of the most difficult and unpredictable circumstances imaginable. When the next storm comes, the county and its citizens know they can rely on Rocket MultiValue to keep everything up and running.

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Jacqueline Weinreich  
Director of Radio & Technology

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