

BUSINESS OF THE WEEK

RACOM – Voice, data and wireless communications

It's hard to believe that a high tech company like RACOM has actually been in business for over 34 years! The first customer in Gregg Miller's new venture back in 1972 was Concrete, Inc. With projects and workers in various locations, they needed a way to communicate with one another. Gregg introduced them to two-way radio and, as they say, the rest is history. RACOM is proud to still have Concrete, Inc. as a loyal customer today.

Other customers in those early days were ag related, small businesses or public safety. Today, over 70% of the company's business is in public safety (police, fire, ambulances, etc.).

While Gregg Miller has always been a visionary in technological advancement, even he couldn't have imagined where technology would be today. Several years ago, RACOM began offering high-speed digital communication throughout the company's territory (all of Iowa and parts of NE, MN, IL and SD) via a network operating out of the company's headquarters in Marshalltown. About 50 million calls route instantaneously through its network control center which is staffed 24/7. In fact, all police two-way radio and wireless data traffic from many of Iowa's largest cities and counties are routed through RACOM's headquarters on State Street prior to being delivered to their final destination. "If you are a police officer using your radio to talk to a fellow officer in Council Bluffs, Polk County, Waterloo, Cedar Falls, Dubuque, Marshalltown, Iowa City, Coralville, the Quad Cities, Burlington or many other areas in the State and you hit the push-to-talk button on your radio, that traffic is routed through our third floor network control center," Miller said. "You can think of

our Marshalltown headquarters building as a 'telephone central office' for emergency 911 two-way radio traffic."

Now, son Mike Miller is leading the way with mobile streaming video, possible because RACOM is one of the few companies offering a broadband connection to moving public safety vehicles. Remote access to real-time video from any computer, anywhere in the world (including the laptop in a moving patrol vehicle) means better and quicker decisions while saving money and lives.

"The radio and computer worlds are coming together, and RACOM is pioneering much of that technology," says vice president Mike Miller. The Marshalltown Police Department was one of the first in the state to deploy a high-speed wireless internet feed of live cameras in various locations throughout the city. During the interview for this article, Mike was able to display live video taking place in several locations. Banks, retailers and schools are a few organizations providing law enforcement with access to the video cameras inside their facilities. Police are also monitoring high crime areas and streaming live video to patrol officers via their laptops.

With all of the data and video running through the RACOM building in Marshalltown, Mike explained that the company retains and stores data for future reference. Public safety agencies depend on RACOM in this "shared" communications network. When constructing the 5-story building addition about 10 years ago, the structural engineers working with Gethmann Construction saw to it that the structure was built to withstand even the most dangerous weather phenomena.

The company maintains sales and service of equipment



RACOM located at 201 W. State Street in Marshalltown

through a network of facilities in its territory. About 25 people work at the Marshalltown headquarters and another 40 work in locations such as Pella, Des Moines, Sioux City, Decorah, Dubuque, Waterloo and Walnut in Iowa, plus

Omaha and Lincoln, NE, Moline, IL and Worthington, MN.

"RACOM is determined to maintain its technological advantage as it serves the men and women of law enforcement and public safety. These

are the folks putting their lives on the line to protect our citizens day in, day out," Mike Miller concluded.

For a GREAT tour and informative website, go to www.racom.net.

