



BAPCO 2020: ON WITH THE SHOW!

All credit to the British Association of Public Safety Communications Officials (BAPCO) which elected to go ahead with its annual conference and exhibition in mid-March despite a worrying upswing in cases of Coronavirus.

Footfall was inevitably down on 2019, but with nearly 1,700 visitors to Coventry's RICOH Arena, the event lost none of its attraction as a showcase for real-life public safety solutions.

Real commitment

For BAPCO president, John Anthony, the two-day gathering was a sign of real commitment. "We are currently living through extraordinarily difficult times, with recent events casting a shadow over everything we do both as a sector and a society. With that in mind, I have to say how immensely proud I am of everyone who turned out to support this year's BAPCO event in Coventry. Their commitment speaks of huge levels of resilience and commitment within our sector, which is always looking for new and innovative advantages in its core mission of protecting the public."

The high-level conference featured more than 40 presentations, included the popular annual 'Emergency Services Network update,' this year delivered by Stephen Webb, Director of law enforcement programmes at the Home Office. Google's Geospatial Technologist, Ed Parsons, was on hand to explain how Android Emergency Location Service is delivering more accurate location data to emergency services in a wireless world, while Steve McLinden,

Digital Programme Manager for Mid & West Wales Fire and Rescue Service described how its £1.2 million grant-funded Transformation 2020 (T20) programme is spearheading the use of RFID to track fire crews and first responders in real time while they work in unfamiliar and hazardous environments.

Revolutionary

Making a welcome return to BAPCO 2020 was a purpose-built Drone Zone, this year demonstrating the use of drones for a variety of operational purposes. According to Lincolnshire Police's Ed Delderfield, an initiative to multi-skill its 1,000 officers to operate UAVs as and when required has revolutionised the way the Force does business.

"If we get a missing person reported in the middle of the night, for instance, we can have the correct resources on the scene within half an hour, rather than waiting for the drone unit's shift to begin at eight the next morning. It's that ability to provide a spontaneous response with a thermal-capable drone which has led to the majority of our successes." He added that the technology fills a vital gap left by a crucial organisational change effecting police air cover at a national level.

Showtime

As always, critical telecommunications

dominated the accompanying trade show. And while GIS, BIM, Data Visualisation and Digital Twinning are key ingredients in the recently-unveiled 'National Policing Digital Strategy 2020-2030', providers of geospatial products and services were somewhat thin on the ground.

That said, Hexagon made the most of the event to showcase its software for safer and smarter cities, while what3words promoted the use of its unique addressing app by 77 UK emergency service providers. FalTech GPS from Penryn in Cornwall presented its range of Repeater modules from Finnish manufacturer Roger GPS. These devices relay GPS, GLONASS and Galileo signals to any indoor location that isn't normally reachable. Needless to say, situational awareness via mapping and GPS interfaces featured in the many command & control, dispatch and communications solutions on display.

For our photo coverage of the event, please visit www.geoconnexion.com/articles/

Those who missed the event in Coventry will doubtless be pleased to hear that BAPCO plans a two-day gathering at St James' Park in Newcastle, 11-12 November 2020. For more information on British APCO membership, or any of its Satellite Series events, please contact the BAPCO office on 03303 327173, email support@bapco.org.uk, or visit <https://www.bapco.org.uk/>.

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