



State of Mississippi

A case study on how a state improves emergency communication to first responders, schools, businesses and citizens with ALERT FM.

**Mississippi is located in the south-eastern portion of the United States.
It is made up of 82 counties and is 46, 907 square miles.
Mississippi has an estimated population of 2,918,785.**

PROBLEMS

The State of Mississippi needed mass notification system that could be used to distribute information to first responders, businesses, schools, and citizens quickly and reliably. Such a system needed to send targeted information, such as weather warnings or emergency information, to geographic areas or “need to know” groups.

- Many Mississippi citizens live in rural areas and are unable to hear outdoor sirens. The State needed a way to warn these people that there is severe weather in the area. They needed a non-traditional notification system to reach these citizens.
- August 29, 2005: Hurricane Katrina, a Category 3 storm, makes landfall along the Mississippi Gulf coast and slowly moves northward across the state killing hundreds of people, destroying thousands of homes, and causing millions of dollars in damage. This massive storm caused wide spread long term power, telephone, and cellular outages across the state. Emergency communication with first responders, businesses, and citizens was limited or non-existent. The State needed a system that had the ability to send and receive messages without power, telephone, or cellular connections.

SOLUTION

After researching various notification systems, the Mississippi Office of Homeland Security purchased ALERT FM as a state-wide notification system. This FM radio-based alert and messaging system allows the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency to send specific messages directly to first responders, schools, businesses, or citizens.

Messages can be sent to specific geographies, such as an entire county or zip code, or to a specific organizational group, such as schools, fire departments, hospitals, or emergency management personnel.

The reliability and redundancy of ALERT FM lies in the use of GSSNet, its digital network of existing FM radio transmitters throughout the State of Mississippi. GSSNet’s overlapping radio signals ensures that there is always a signal that can be received even during the most critical situations.

The State’s purchase of ALERT FM included the system license as well as ALERT FM receivers that were placed in all 82 county emergency operations centers.