

West Babylon School District Selects KENWOOD NEXEDGE® DMR Radios for Expanded Coverage



PROJECT OVERVIEW: The West Babylon School District on Long Island needed to upgrade their analog radios to digital. With KENWOOD DMR radios, they could add the valuable features of digital radios, supplementing and enhancing their analog system during the transition.

The city of West Babylon is in Suffolk County on Long Island, 32 miles east of New York City. Established in 1872, it counts American poet Walt Whitman among its famous residents. The West Babylon School District covers more than eight square miles, employs more than 750 people and serves 3,757 students in its high school, middle school and five primary schools. The district ranks in the top 50% in the state for reading and math skills and has a graduation rate of 89%.

“We have all noticed and appreciated the change in voice quality. The signal is clearer. We are able to communicate further.”

— Edwin Salas, Director of Security for the West Babylon School District

When considering an upgrade to the existing analog two-way radio system, Edwin Salas, the Director of Security for the West Babylon School District, considered multiple vendors and ultimately purchased KENWOOD DMR radios from KENWOOD Authorized Dealer, Suffolk County Communications, Inc. (SCC) in Bohemia, New York. SCC was able to accommodate the district's budget and improve their communications at the same time. Flipping to an all new system at once wasn't necessary. DMR radios added value to what the district already had, supplementing and enhancing their existing analog communications. The new digital radios could run on the existing analog frequencies. As budget allowed, the district added a repeater system and SCC simply reprogrammed the radios to work on the new digital repeater system.

The West Babylon School District uses KENWOOD NX-3320 and NX-1300D portables and their transportation department uses NX-3820 mobiles in their vehicles. The district has a five channel DMR Tier 2 system with 10 voice talk paths, running through a combiner system. Some system features include enhanced digital encryption, Over-the-Air alias, department based priority channels with the enhanced KENWOOD LED color scheme, the ability to record transmissions on their radios and emergency over-the-air tone.

DMR technology doubles the capacity of a standard analog channel, dramatically increasing availability for voice communications and decreasing the probability of contention, which is a type of interference that occurs when more than one person tries to access the same channel. DMR radios have a more consistent usable range that can be

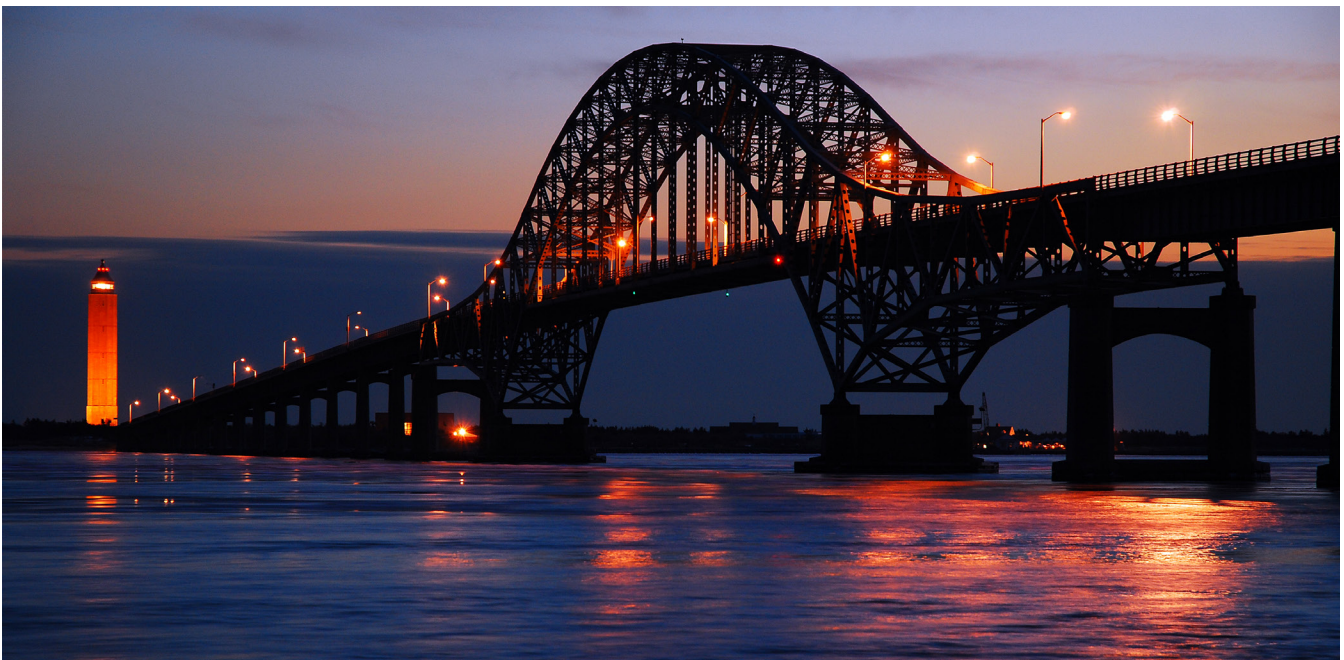
up to 20% farther than analog radios. For West Babylon, this was critical. One issue they were facing before the upgrade was occasionally losing communications with buses as they traveled to the northern borders of the district.

DMR enhances the KENWOOD heritage of audio performance with improved noise reduction and unchanging voice quality even over long distances. As Salas noted, "We have all noticed and appreciated the change in voice quality. The signal is clearer. We are able to communicate further."

Because DMR radios use the radio transmitter function for roughly half the time of analog radios, batteries last longer. This translates to consistent radio performance through an entire shift and beyond.

"Everyone carries a radio. All the building principals, the security guards, grounds, bus drivers, physical ed teachers, nurses and everyone on each building's Emergency Level Team."

– Edwin Salas, Director of Security for the West Babylon School District



Great South Bay Bridge, Long Island, New York

With the upgrade to DMR radios, West Babylon now has what Salas calls, “A bridge to everywhere. We no longer have any issue with losing communications.”

This is crucial in the district because, Salas says, “Everyone carries a radio. All the building principals, the security guards, grounds, bus drivers, physical ed teachers, nurses and everyone on each building’s Emergency Level Team.”

Every one of the seven schools in the district has their own channel, rather than one channel for the entire district. As Salas said, “Not having everyone stepping over each other on one channel is great. Individual groups can communicate only with each other. Day to day, there is a lot of communications going on in the elementary schools that isn’t essential to others but had the potential to be so annoying, running in the background, that important communications were in danger of being ignored. With clear channel assignments, when a message is important to everyone, it’s not going to be ignored.”

Before joining the district, Salas worked at a police department, where, as he says “We always use radios. It’s simply second nature. Radios just make communications in an emergency fast and easy.”

“Radios are smoother than a cell phone. With radios, it’s immediate. Everyone hears the same message at once. When you need all hands on deck, you can’t afford to use a phone and call one person at a time.”

– Edwin Salas, Director of Security for the West Babylon School District



The district has a high school, middle school and five grade schools.

Besides, Salas adds, “Radios are smoother than a cell phone. With phones, you have to rely on people to multitask, to look down at their phone and take the time to respond to a text. With radios, it’s immediate. Everyone hears the same message at once. When you need all hands on deck, you can’t afford to use a phone and call one person at a time.”

One feature that Salas values is scanning. District members who regularly travel between schools need to pick up on “the chatter”, which they can do with the DMR radio scanning feature. The district’s security guards also rely on the radios’ scanning feature because a developing situation at one school may spread to others. Being able to scan allows them to get ahead of potential problems. When there is an emergency, Salas said, “We can connect efficiently. In the past, if there was an emergency call to evacuate, people got on their cell phones, sending text messages, or trying to call each other, which results in lost time.”

Salas said that another outstanding feature of the KENWOOD DMR radio system is the service they receive from their KENWOOD authorized dealer, Suffolk County Communications. He credits them with easing them through the transition and helping the district to introduce the new digital radios as the district’s users and budgets would allow.

Salas said they now have it so good with their communications system that, “You forget what it was like a few years ago because now, we have it so good!”

LOCAL DEALER PARTNER:



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CUSTOMER:



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