Using Shared Situational Awareness to Protect the Nation's Capital on Independence Day

Introduction

Each year for the 4th of July, Washington, DC hosts one of the largest festivals and fireworks celebrations in the United States. Beginning early in the day on the 4th, hundreds of thousands of people converge on the National Mall and position themselves on the shores of the Potomac and in the shadows of the National Monuments for the best view of the concerts and fireworks display. In order to provide medical services, security, and operations support for the patrons at this annual event, many federal, state, and local agencies work together to coordinate personnel, logistics, management, and incident response activities.

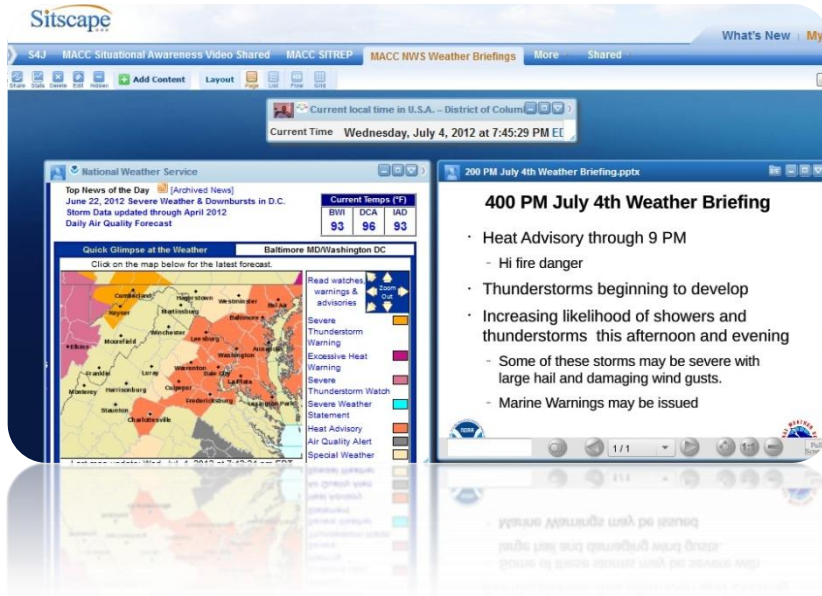## SitScape and the 4th of July Celebration

Beginning in the spring of 2012, SitScape began to work with personnel from a number of federal and local law enforcement agencies involved with Washington, DC July 4th celebration emergency management effort. The United States Park Police (USPP) served as the coordinating agency for the project, and SitScape served as the collaborative and common operating picture (COP) software for participating agencies. In the Multi-Agency Coordination Center (MACC), SitScape played a key role in facilitating information flow between federal and local agencies and their command and operational units.

Figure 1 - SitScape 4th of July Emergency Management COP
This Common Operating Picture (COP) display helped federal and local emergency management officials monitor activity throughout the National Mall on 4 July, 2012

SitScape's common operating picture software served as a platform to bring a number of disparate applications together to assist emergency personnel in monitoring various security and emergency response situations that developed throughout the day and evening of July 4th. USPP uses a number of standalone desktop applications, like CapWin, to monitor and provide emergency updates to dispersed personnel. By using proprietary technology to virtualize CapWin, SitScape provided time sensitive incident updates to a number of mobile emergency response sites throughout the National Mall area of operations, which increased overall situational awareness throughout the area of operations.

In addition to desktop applications, USPP and the other emergency units participating in 4th of July National Mall Security operations used a number of web based applications to facilitate completion of their missions. SitScape's ability to combine parts of web pages, video, and standalone applications into concise, distributable, secure COPs played a large role in the information flow during the events on the National Mall. SitScape combined web based emergency management applications like WebEOC with IP and web based video cameras to combine information for watch commanders, and command centers to access those sources remotely.

Figure 2 - SitScape 4th of July Weather COP. This display helped National Weather Service (NWS) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) meteorologists monitor and predict weather activity throughout the National Capitol Region on 4 July, 2012

Due to extreme heat in the DC area and the potential for severe weather near the scheduled time of the fireworks on 4 July 2012, meteorologists from the National Weather Service (NWS) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) played an important role in the day's emergency management operations. Throughout the day, meteorologists provided up to the minute weather briefings to the MACC Commander and representatives from partner agencies. Using SitScape's collaborative capabilities, forecasters combined relevant weather information for the MACC and for personnel stationed at mobile and remote command locations. As the scheduled time for the fireworks approached, SitScape allowed MACC leadership to quickly disseminate the meteorologists' analysis and predictions to the agencies responsible for guest safety, which contributed to a safe experience for the hundreds of thousands of guests attending the 4th of July Celebration.

More Information

To learn more about how SitScape technology solutions can help you increase your situational awareness and collaboration capabilities, contact us as info@sitscape.com, or call our sales department at 888-762-6562.