

# VX-450 Series Portable Radios Provide Lifeline for Hobbie Volunteer Fire Company

## CASE STUDY

### CUSTOMER PROFILE

<b>Customer</b>	Hobbie Volunteer Fire & EMS Hollenback Township, Pennsylvania
<b>Industry</b>	Public Safety
<b>Vertex Standard Radios Used</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● VX-350 Series Portables</li> <li>● VX-450 Series Portables</li> <li>● VX-5500 Mobile</li> </ul>
<b>Benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Complete safety features</li> <li>● Man Down Alert</li> <li>● Improved coverage</li> <li>● Auto-Range Transpond System (ARTS™)</li> <li>● Reliable performance</li> </ul>



### Overview

Founded over 63 years ago, Hobbie Volunteer Fire Company continues to serve 1,200 residents in the mountains of rural Pennsylvania's Luzerne County. Whether it's teaching fire prevention, responding to a house fire in a remote area of Hollenback Township or rescuing a trapped farmer from his overturned tractor, the department's 24 active volunteers are ready to serve.

On an annual basis, these volunteer firefighters respond to about 45 incidents per year. Each incident represents potential danger as volunteers suit up, climb aboard the fire engine and get ready to hit the ground running. However, lack of reliable two-way radio communications had become a serious point of concern, especially in the county's mountainous terrain where coverage was unreliable.

### The Challenge: Comply with narrowband; ensure greater safety features; stay within budget

"We were using radios that were over 14 years old," said Fire Chief Bob Reader. "The audio quality of the old radios was inadequate, requiring everyone on both sides to repeat what they said numerous times. We also had some dead spots in our coverage area where we had no communication at all. Overall, the radios were big, bulky and difficult to use."

Needing to upgrade the department's fleet of radios to comply with the FCC's narrowband mandate, Chief Reader took the opportunity to begin looking for newer, smaller, and better radios that would enhance communications as well as improve his team's safety. Contacting Convergence Communications, LLC in Hazleton, PA to learn what was available, the Chief eventually purchased six Vertex Standard VX-350 portable radios.

"We are a volunteer department so our budget is small and I needed to get more bang for my buck," the Chief noted. "With the Vertex Standard VX-350 Series, I could purchase radios for half the price of most others on the market. That means I can communicate with two guys no matter where they are at the scene instead of just one guy standing on the fire engine."



### The Solution: VX-350 Series for EMS; VX-450 Series for Fire Responders

The radios also had all the safety features the department was looking for, including Emergency Alert which transmits an alert to call for help; Lone Worker that enables remote workers to automatically check in with the supervisor; and Auto-Range Transpond System (ARTS™) that alerts the radio user when he or she is out of contact with another ARTS-equipped radio.

The VX-350 Series portable radios worked well for the team, improving coverage as well as overcoming the audio issues they had experienced with the old radios and garnering positive comments from users. Then about a year later Vertex Standard announced the VX-450 Series, which included the critical Man Down feature, and Chief Reader reached out once again to Convergence.

“After learning more about it, I decided to purchase the new VX-450 portables with the Man Down feature for the firefighters and give the VX-350 radios to EMS,” Chief Reader notes. “Since I still needed to upgrade EMS radios for narrowband and EMS didn’t need the Man Down feature, it seemed to be the most logical, cost effective approach.”

### The Result: Vertex Standard radios exceed all expectations

Today when the Hobbie Volunteer Fire Company arrives on scene, firefighters carry VX-450 Series portable radios equipped with the critical Man Down feature, greatly improved audio clarity, extended range, and better coverage, significantly enhancing the safety of each man on duty.

In addition, the department has installed VX-5500 mobile radios in its fire engine, tanker, brush truck, off-road utility vehicle and in the chief’s vehicle. Convergence Communications designed

custom installations for each vehicle that improve efficiency and ease of use. For example, a dual control head was installed near the pump panel of the fire engine, allowing personnel at the back of the truck to use the radio without having to run up to the front to change channels. Convergence also mounted an external speaker and a microphone port at the rear of the brush truck, allowing the crew to use the radios while continuing to run the pump. Convergence then did a custom mount of the mobile radio into the glove compartment of the off-road vehicle, which is more exposed to weather, providing adequate protection for the communications equipment.

With the new safety features, greatly improved audio, extended range and custom installations, the Hobbie Fire Company is very happy with their new Vertex Standard radios. “The audio quality is superb and the coverage and extended range lets us talk across the entire township,” Chief Reader comments. “The radios are also very easy to learn and use. We are very satisfied with the whole package – the price, the reliability, and the customer support. I would recommend these radios to anybody.”



### About Vertex Standard

At Vertex Standard, we challenge ourselves to find a better way to build two-way radios that do more for less to effectively meet the needs of our customers around the world. Vertex Standard is known for compact, reliable, full-featured radios that are built to last. Customers using Vertex Standard radios immediately recognize the quality and value they get for their money. Vertex Standard was founded in 1956 with headquarters located in Tokyo, Japan. Visit [www.vertexstandard.com](http://www.vertexstandard.com) for more information.