

## **Virtual USA Video – Transcript**

### **Narrator:**

Virtual USA, the right information at the right time for the right people.

When emergencies like floods, hurricanes, or oil spills impact multiple jurisdictions, response agencies in neighboring communities need to see what's going on across boundaries. However, they often do not have the time, resources, or relationships to easily share information.

### **Speaker 1:**

It was estimated in 1999, during the hurricane Floyd evacuation, over 1.5 million Floridians came up I-95, I-75 and other state and federal highways and roads into the State of Georgia. Emergency managers in the southern portion of our state were blind. They had no idea the amount of volume, the amount of residents that were coming up into their jurisdiction. They were not able to make adequate plans for sheltering, feeding, traffic control.

When disasters strike neighboring states, it's important for us to have the most accurate, up-to-date information of what is going on, how the situation is evolving, what resources, what actions Georgia might be able to or might need to be required to take.

During these often-times confusing and evolving disasters, operators don't have the resources to contact the states being impacted by the disaster. Likewise, those states being impacted don't have the time, the resources, or the ability to stop what it is they're doing and give us accurate information.

### **Narrator:**

Virtual USA was designed to address these challenges, by providing an information pipeline between emergency management systems. Virtual USA allows agencies to view the most relevant and real-time information during an incident. Virtual USA does not store everyone's data in one central location. Instead, it provides a way for agencies to share live data so that partnering entities can view the most accurate and up-to-date information using equipment they already have. Agencies maintain control of their data and can determine what to share, who has access, and for how long.

### **Speaker 1:**

The Virtual USA system allows us to see the disaster or the potential impact in Georgia long before it occurs. It allows us to make logical decisions, make adequate preparations, and get a common operating platform long before the disaster hits.

**Narrator:**

The 2010 Gulf Oil Spill provides an example of how interstate and interagency information sharing can improve response.

**Speaker 2:**

During the Deep Water Horizon response, because of the reconnaissance reports that were coming in from folks that were out either in an aircraft, in a boat, or on the beach on an ATV. They were able to radio the reports in, radio their coordinates, and get the data into the visualization tool. Then we could have back at our branch offices, they would actually go out and deploy the cleanup crews to go to that specific reconnaissance report and clean that area.

**Narrator:**

Through Virtual USA, agencies build on their own data, hardware, and software. They use the Internet and open data standards to share information between existing systems, saving money and reducing the need for additional training.

**Speaker 1:**

The advantage to Virtual USA and the Virtual USA concept is it does not require the impacted or the host state or the responding state to upload, begin any new programs, or view in another system. They can view the information when they want to see it, where they want to see it in their native viewer.

**Speaker 3:**

The fact is that each jurisdiction has its own unique needs. It may or may not have the capability to build its own common operating picture. If it does, the role that we should take as a partner is to share the information that we have with them, and to ensure that we've got the trust and relationship built to where we can work with them and have them share the information we need to do our jobs.

If we can create that common operating picture within the Pacific Northwest, we can in fact create a national capability for emergency management—emergency response that would not have been possible without Virtual USA.

**Narrator:**

Virtual USA is continuing to evolve as part of a broader strategy to improve information sharing among emergency response agencies. You can get involved now using your existing systems and help shape the future of Virtual USA. Visit [www.vusa.us](http://www.vusa.us)