



# ComTech Communications

## Designed for Success

### Results

- High reliability to help firefighters respond quicker to alerts
- Increased safety with automated controls
- Improved energy efficiency
- Scalable, affordable control solution
- Customizable for added functionality
- Easy to use
- Fast implementation
- Long-term GE support

*"One of the primary challenges we faced in delivering these capabilities was the ability to control all audio and lighting systems within fire stations while offering expandability from a base hardware platform. To do this, we needed a highly reliable controller with sufficient memory, I/O count and expandability. To make the system easier to implement and to use, we were also looking for a device that is quickly programmed and backed up with long-term support. GE had what we were looking for."*

**Allen Campbell**

**Designer and Product Manager  
ComTech Communications**

## Hot Technology

### Firefighters Respond Quicker to Alerts, and Stations are Safer and More Energy Efficient with Automation System

Firefighters rush from their stations at a moment's notice to save burning buildings and human lives, but, ironically, their speed in helping others can put their own firehouses at risk of danger or result in costly operational overhead. As a result, ComTech Communications (Sacramento, CA) has developed a fire station alerting system that automatically controls all lighting, audio and other user-defined systems throughout a fire station to increase safety, improve energy efficiency and help get firefighters out of the station faster. Automated with controls from GE Fanuc Automation, a unit of GE Infrastructure, the system ensures that, when the big trucks need to leave the station, the lights come on to help get the firefighters out the door, then turn off along with potentially hazardous appliances such as stoves and barbecues – all automatically.

#### **Burning Requirements**

To help make fire stations safer in the Sacramento area, ComTech's fire station alerting system was recently implemented at 12 fire stations throughout the region. "The Sacramento area fire chiefs clearly laid out their expectations and requirements for such a system, as a result of incidents at the stations themselves while the firefighters were responding to alarms," explains Allen Campbell, Designer and Product Manager at ComTech Communications. "Firefighters need to leave the stations quickly and can't take the time to turn on lights in the dark when an alarm first sounds or turn off lights and appliances when leaving."



imagination at work

According to Campbell, the Sacramento area departments requested a fire station alerting system capable of integrating any known two-way radio signaling format, as well as selective call decoders from a number of manufacturers. Additional requirements included: controlling fire station lighting and public address systems, expanding easily and cost effectively to accommodate additional functions and providing consistency across all stations in a particular region or district.

“One of the primary challenges we faced in delivering these capabilities was the ability to control all audio and lighting systems within fire stations while offering expandability from a base hardware platform,” says Allen Campbell. “To do this, we needed a highly reliable controller with sufficient memory, I/O count and expandability. To make the system easier to implement and to use, we were also looking for a device that is quickly programmed and backed up with long-term support. GE had what we were looking for.”

#### A Red Hot Solution

ComTech’s Model 10 Fire Station Alerting System utilizes a GE Fanuc VersaMax® Micro PLC as the central system controller, and a compact, text-based VersaMax Data Panel operator interface for field programmability. Designed for use as I/O, as a PLC and/or as distributed control for up to 256 I/O points, VersaMax PLCs feature a modular and scaleable architecture, intuitive features and ease of use that saves initial costs for machine and system builders and lifecycle costs for end users. A VersaMax PLC also controls each of the ComTech system’s two expansion modules.



The Model 10 Fire Station Alerting System responds to nine selective two-way radio alert inputs and seven Wide Area Network (WAN) alerts from emergency dispatch centers equipped with computer-aided dispatch systems. For example, when a station is alerted by dispatch, the Model 10 automatically turns on the lights at a firehouse to awaken firefighters, then turns off the lights after a designated time frame. An alert can also trigger the automatic shutdown of specified appliances. In addition, the alerting system responds to doorbells and fire/security alarms, and can be customized to other user needs.

ComTech’s Model 10 Fire Station Alerting System has been operational at stations throughout the Sacramento area for more than a year, and officials are pleased with the reliability, scalability and affordability of the solution.

“Our systems give fire departments peace of mind in knowing that their stations are reliably alerted and have a variety of future support options available to them when they need to expand,” Campbell says.

#### About ComTech Communications

Sacramento, California-based ComTech Communications ([www.comtechcomm.com](http://www.comtechcomm.com)) is the public safety division of the Comtech family. Comtech has been in business since 1984, when it entered the cellular telephone industry as a distributor of equipment and a reseller of services. The firm went on to build its own nationwide paging system. Today, ComTech Communications manufactures a fire station alerting system and provides communications system sales and services.

#### GE Fanuc Automation Information Centers

USA and the Americas:  
1- 800-GE FANUC  
or (434) 978-5100

Europe, Middle East and Africa:  
(352) 727979-1

Asia Pacific:  
86-21-3222-4555

#### Additional Resources

For more information, please visit the GE Fanuc web site at:

[www.gefanuc.com](http://www.gefanuc.com)

