Frame Relay for Corporate Networks
Satellite back-up for the United States Postal Service

When the United States Postal Service (USPS) asked Spacenet, Gilat’s US subsidiary to implement a Skystar Advantage VSAT network to back up and supplement its existing terrestrial Frame Relay network, it was no small task - in fact, it was three times larger than any VSAT network in existence. Yet, not only was the task successfully completed but the network has already proven itself effective in a real life crisis - the attacks on September 11th.

The Client

As the nation’s largest retailer, with tens of thousands of locations across the country, the USPS’s corporate network is larger than most. However, unlike many other retailers, the USPS’s offices are not confined to large population centers — which is one of the key reasons that a Spacenet satellite network was a perfect fit for the USPS’s unique needs. The satellite-based Frame Assist solution was one of the only technologies that was capable of providing broadband connectivity to each of the USPS’s 27,000 small associate offices — even those in the most remote areas.

The Network

The USPS uses Gilat’s Skystar Advantage™ technology to connect its smaller offices to its terrestrial Frame Relay network, giving these locations — and the local residents who depend on them — access to the same products and services available in large metropolitan Post Offices. The network is used for point-of-sale data polling, credit authorization, delivery confirmation, software distribution, troubleshooting of the terrestrial Frame Relay network, and more. In addition, the USPS is using Skystar Advantage VSAT technology as a more reliable and efficient replacement for the ISDN Frame Relay backup solution it previously used at 7,000 of its large associate offices. Finally, the USPS has chosen to use its satellite network as the platform to provide its large and small locations with access to emerging applications, including streaming video, interactive distance learning, and multicast content delivery.

The Attacks on September 11

Using VSATs as a backup for terrestrial systems is a proven and reliable solution. Nowhere was this truer than the September 11 attack on the world trade centers in New York. The USPS offices in New York went immediately back on line after USPS pointed its existing VSAT network towards New York. When frame relay went down, a satellite connection took over.