Fire and rescue services develop strong interest in Primetech MultiPod and MultiPod COBRA

From the unveiling of Primetech's MultiPod concept at The Emergency Services Show in September 2016, there has been strong interest in the groundbreaking new flexible, universal demountable vehicle body system throughout the UK and international markets.

The MultiPod COBRA is a brand-new fire fighting concept built on Primetech's successful frame unit incorporated into a MultiPod.

In an exclusive partnership with Swedish company Cold Cut Systems, MultiPod will be the host for a unique lightweight version of the COBRA high pressure lance-based fire fighting system. The MultiPod COBRA is the flagship product for Primetech and Cold Cut Systems, who will be exhibiting at the LGA Fire Conference and Exhibition from 7-8 March at The Hilton Newcastle Gateshead in Newcastle Upon Tyne.

Lighter weight

The MultiPod COBRA is a brand-new concept which follows on from Primetech's successful frame unit. MultiPod COBRA retains the same water carrying and fire fighting capability as the standard COBRA model. However, it now has the benefit of a substantial reduction in weight, with the same 7-8 minutes of operation, therefore enhancing the speed and flexibility of a lighter weight device on utility vehicles. MultiPod COBRA is a significant development for fire and rescue services, giving them a major new weapon in their fire fighting armoury.

Roland Anderson, Global Sales And Marketing Director for Cold Cut Systems, explains, "The aim is to do what Henry Walker has been trying to do for a long time, to get a Cobra system fitted to pickups. The MultiPod system looks very interesting for smaller vehicles. It now looks as if, with the new lighter Cobra system integrated with the MultiPod, we will have a solution for pickups in most parts of the world. It is a 300-bar pressure system, so the pressure is still the same as for our larger systems but with a lower flow rate, but it is not for a frontline pumper application, it is a pickup-based system.

"We have had a lot of requests especially from retained fire fighting services, from small islands and remote communities in mountainous and forest areas and villages, where you need 4 x 4 pickup vehicles to get around. We have had requests from these types of places for many years, but there has been no suitable product that we could put up.

"This new MultiPod COBRA, designed and built in partnership with Primetech, will complement our existing Coldcut COBRA range. MultiPod COBRA is not a replacement for our existing larger units, it is an ideal alternative should an organisation be wanting to utilise a smaller vehicle, but wanting to have the same benefits of cutting and extinguishing capabilities. MultiPod COBRA is an excellent new option for fire and rescue services worldwide."

One of the unique features of the MultiPod demountable body system is that no vehicle modifications are required. MultiPod can be easily and quickly mounted on any standard utility vehicles. With no modification required, there are many benefits to the emergency services. A fire and rescue service can adapt its existing fleet vehicles which have outgrown their original purpose, thus giving the FRS a cost saving capability without the expense of acquiring new vehicles or paying for vehicle modifications. With MultiPod, and the wide range of internal configuration options, the possibility is now available for the vehicle to deliver multiple capabilities.

Collaborative working

With the recent changes within the fire sector, and the urge from Government for collaborative working, fire and rescue services are looking at new ideas and initiatives, as are the ambulance services. Ambulance services are requiring flexible, lower-cost vehicle options capable of carrying patients from remote areas. In situations where a traditional ambulance is unable to reach the casualty, a MultiPod installed on an off-road vehicle ensures the patients' needs can be met. MultiPod is less expensive to acquire and more economical to run than many other vehicle body options. It assists the emergency services by providing a solution in which an emergency can be dealt with in a new unique category of vehicle.

Community Protection Vehicle

Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service is one of the first organisations to explore the collaborative and flexible emergency response potential of MultiPod. When looking at the concept of a multi-capability Community Protection Vehicle, MultiPod fits in with the drive for increased levels of collaboration between the emergency services, to improve public safety in an era of tighter budgets, along with the need for diversified, expanded and more effective use of service resources.

The 'Community Protection Vehicle' project for Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service is still in its conceptual planning, specification and evaluation phases, although certain key features and benefits are starting to emerge. There are two possible configurations being considered, one with an emphasis on misting-based fire fighting and the other with the unique new, lighter MultiPod COBRA/MPN solution. The CPV would have the option to carry medical equipment, including a defibrillator, rescue tools and additional community support kit.

'MultiPod COBRA is a brand-new fire fighting concept built on Primetech's MultiPod. It retains the same water-carrying and fire fighting capability as the standard COBRA model, with the added benefits of a substantial reduction in weight and improved off-road capability.'

Both system configurations are designed to provide quick response options for providing collaborative support for paramedics, and for firefighters dealing with small fires which do not require the deployment of a full fire tender. These solutions provide an initial response before the arrival of a full Pre-

Determined Attendance, larger and more comprehensive fire appliances, or off-road emergency response capability.

Emergency services are particularly impressed with the wide range of options for configuring the internal storage areas of the MultiPod, from slide-out trays, side access panels, colour-coded compartments and storage. MultiPods are strong, rust-free and lighter than alternative metal body options.

Features and capabilities

Key features and capabilities of the two different versions of the CPV being considered by Gloucestershire FRS include:

Version 1, with a MistMax system:

- Collaborative support to colleagues – (NHS Paramedics / Ambulance crews)
- Persons locked in or out
- Persons trapped
- Community support – trips, slips and falls
- Increased speed of response - fuel leaks, small vehicle fires
- Improved locational access
- Off-road agility
- Simplicity of use.

Version two, with the MultiPod COBRA/MPN system instead of a misting only system, will provide the above capabilities, but also:

- Initial support to larger fires; building fires.

Commenting on the development of the new collaborative Community Protection Vehicle concept, Andy Hermiston, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service, said, "Fire and rescue services in the UK continue to progressively develop and broaden our community protection role by adding value in what would have been previously perceived as unconventional ways.

"Reducing risk and improving outcomes for our communities and for our firefighters will always be of paramount importance, and the service needs to consider and adopt new innovative and agile solutions to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

"Vehicles such as the Community Protection Vehicle (CPV) allow services the ability to respond quickly to any emergency with the right resources whilst optimising our capacity to deliver lifesaving prevention and intervention responses to meet the new and ever increasing public expectation of the fire and rescue service."

Easy solution

Henry Walker, Technical Director for Primetech, added, "We are extremely pleased and enthusiastic with the development of this concept. The MultiPod has been extraordinarily well received from a wide variety of organisations from within the emergency service and commercial sectors.

"When funding is restricted for new vehicles within an organisation, MultiPod is an easy solution. Utilising existing vehicles with MultiPod can resurrect their use and, combined with the fact that no structural modification is required, there is an added value.

"Key drivers are return on investment and reduction in capital expenditure, plus ease of adoption. There are no procedures required for tilt or crash testing, as the load carrying capability of the vehicle has not been modified and the characteristics have not been changed in any way.

"Speed of response to road traffic incidents, for example, and rural access, are crucial; vehicles with the MultiPod can go where front line appliances can't reach. It can be part of a true off-road 4 x 4 vehicle.

"With the MultiPod's versatile internal storage capacity, MultiPod can carry MultiNet, the single and multi-agency command communications system, as well as police and paramedic support equipment.

"There are many more imaginative uses of the MultiPod concept, as the emergency services introduce increased collaborative and effective new vehicle variants.'

www.primetech.co.uk

Primetech dual satcomms-through-one-receiver breakthrough supports high profile media expedition

Using the new Primetech/Avanti/C-COM dual satellite solution through one satellite receiver dish, media teams from Top Gear, The Daily Telegraph and Car magazine could transmit video, send and receive email, provide live web updates, and link to other communications systems, despite being in extremely remote locations

A Primetech-supported media communications vehicle, equipped with a newly developed C-COM/Avanti Ka-band satellite solution, was used to provide reliable voice and data communications for a high profile off-road media expedition in remote Scottish locations. In the process, deployment of the system provided proof of concept for an advanced new combined satellite signal solution for accessing two satellites through one satellite receiver, delivering improved resilience. The system has a wide variety of emergency service applications.

In the case of the proposed trans-Scotland drive for motoring media, such as Top Gear and The Daily Telegraph, Primetech worked closely with its partners, satellite operator Avanti and satellite receiver manufacturer C-COM, to develop, install and test a radical new solution that allows two satellites to be accessed through one satellite dish instead of two, a technological breakthrough that is of much interest across a wide variety of sectors.

The solution was developed and used to support journalists covering a trip by a group of off-road vehicles travelling across 11 remote Scottish estates. It enabled Ka-band mobile satellite broadband to be accessed in remote areas with a high degree of reliability. A Wi-Fi 'bubble' around the communications support vehicle, using the MultiNet Comms system, enabled the journalists to send their reports back to base. The key challenge was how to guarantee satellite access across the high mountain ranges being crossed, given the height barriers which could have prevented access to satellite signals.

With the new solution developed by the combined satellite comms teams, if one Avanti satellite was unable to be accessed because of the remote and mountainous locations preventing signal lock-on, the system would automatically seek out and access another satellite signal, using software developed by satellite receiver manufacturer C-COM. This was all done using just one auto-pointing satellite receiver dish.

Increased signal resilience

With this breakthrough, the three partners demonstrated how their elegantly simple solution can provide users of mobile satellite broadband systems with increased signal resilience for a wide variety of different locations, regardless of conditions.

This is of particular interest to mobile sat comms users such as emergency services, who operate daily in challenging and diverse conditions - so called 'urban canyons', for example, in adverse weather conditions and in remote environments.

"It is here that the black G-Wagen unfurls yet another surprise and sprouts an actual satellite dish from which the various media types can check their FaceTwitter and update their logs. I pretend to have to do the same, just to fit in." *Top Gear*

Using the new solution, along with other integrated communications solutions, such as Primetech's MultiNet Comms system, to deliver COFDM MESH Wi-Fi around communications nodes, the media covering the trip could transmit video, send and receive e-mail, provide live web updates and link to other communications systems.

www.primetech.co.uk