

# Air Methods

## Case Study—Using visualization to shape traffic on the network



### About the company

Air Methods<sup>®</sup> Corporation (NASDAQ: AIRM) is the nation's largest provider of air medical emergency transport services and systems. The company is dedicated exclusively to air medical transport, focusing on the quality of care to patients, and safety in aviation operations.

Each year Air Methods Corporation transports more than 98,000 patients who require intensive medical care either from accident scenes or from general care hospitals to highly skilled trauma centers or tertiary care centers. To handle the urgency and volume of these critical missions, the Englewood, Colorado-based company operates a fleet of 300 helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft at 236 bases in 42 states.

### Beyond Airlifts

Air Methods is dedicated exclusively to the field of air medical transport but its product and service offerings extend well beyond the actual airlifts. The company also designs and manufactures medical aircraft equipment and interiors, provides a complete medical air and ground transport billing solution for providers, and maintains a nationwide medical communications network.

The communications network supports key offices in five different locations plus 236 remote bases that access the

network via VPN. Each of the five main offices provides a specialized operational function:

- Colorado—corporate headquarters
- California—billing center
- Omaha—dispatch
- St. Louis—dispatch
- Pennsylvania—helicopter maintenance

Supporting the network from Air Methods' Colorado headquarters is senior network engineer Xavier Chaparro—the sole networking engineer among a 20-person IT department. He provides support for all network applications and, along with a radio engineer, also provides support for critical radio-over-IP used for live communications from aircraft to the remote bases.

## LiveAction™ Case Study

# Air Methods

### Network Expansion Spurs a Change

In the past, Chaparro used WAN optimization appliances to shape traffic across an MPLS network. However when a network expansion required considerably more bandwidth than the hardware could support, Chaparro opted to use the quality of service (QoS) functionality already included with his Cisco routers rather than reinvesting in larger, more costly appliances. After downloading a free trial and attending a live demonstration from the ActionPacked! Networks sales team, he decided to move ahead and purchase LiveAction® software to help manage Cisco QoS on the Air Methods network.

### Visibility, Accuracy, and Ease of Use

Although he was comfortable with his own ability to manage Cisco routers using the traditional command line interface (CLI), when Chaparro saw a demonstration of how LiveAction could be used to manage Cisco QoS, he immediately realized the power and convenience the product had to offer.

"I primarily liked the way it provided visualization for QoS so I could actually see how it shaped the traffic passing through each interface," Chaparro said. "I also like being able to change my QoS policies on the fly with LiveAction. It's a lot better than using the CLI because I can actually see and verify the changes I'm implementing."

He stated that while you still have to know and understand what you are doing, LiveAction makes the job of managing Cisco networks much easier. "Configuring QoS with command

lines is very cumbersome and it's easy to make a mistake and not realize it. LiveAction simplifies the process for creating and implementing policies and it also prevents errors."

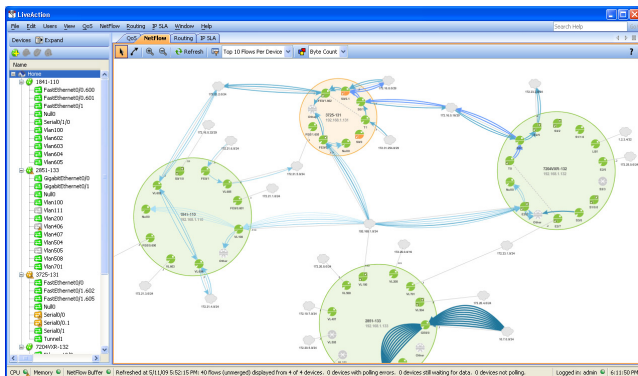
### Less Cost, More Flexibility

When Chaparro started the project, he knew the network was already in good condition so transitioning from the WAN optimizer hardware to LiveAction software went very smoothly. With the help of LiveAction he uses Cisco's QoS function to classify his network traffic and applications. Previously he relied on the WAN appliances to filter individual applications.

Today as the company grows and evolves, the Air Methods network also adapts to these changes on a continuing basis. Every few weeks, Chaparro uses LiveAction to adjust the networking environment to accommodate new applications and changes to the traffic mix.

### Find Out More About Air Methods

If you are interested in learning more about Air Methods, visit their website at [www.airmethods.com](http://www.airmethods.com).



### Live Topology Views

AirMethods relies on LiveAction topology views like this one to instantly view network routes and flows, locate sources of congestion, and zoom in to see them in extreme detail.



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S0004-001A-0411