



**White Paper**

**Selecting  
Outdoor Enclosures for  
Land Mobile Radio  
Base Stations**

**Date: August, 2012**



## 1. Introduction

Project 25 (P25) is a public safety communications standard dedicated to ensuring interoperability in communications.

It is designed to ensure fast and secure communications between local, state and federal agencies when protecting the public's

welfare. As agencies migrate their analog Land Mobile Radio (LMR) to digital P25 infrastructure, there are several differences with the new network architecture to be considered by these agencies.



First, much of the older analog infrastructure equipment must be upgraded to newer P25 digital equipment. When agencies are assessing new infrastructure equipment, they should also consider new locations for base stations as well. Geographic reach of the newer P25 systems is better than older analog coverage, and operators should reassess the effectiveness of their current base station locations.

Second, the equipment used within a P25 base station now includes commercial-grade switches, routers, firewalls, trunking repeaters, Rx multi-couplers, and Tx combiners. Much of the P25 base station equipment is commercial-grade equipment designed for indoor installations, and will require a specific thermal environment for optimal performance.

Third, the plethora of alternative wireless technologies available to the general public (i.e. cellular, WiFi, WiMax,...) has raised the uptime requirements for all public service and law enforcement agencies. Real-time communications with 100% uptime is mandatory for proactive response to emergency situations involving the general public.

Fourth, all budgets - city, county, state, and federal - continue to contract. Agencies need to focus on the initial capital acquisition cost, but more importantly, they need to understand the operational cost of managing their networks year-over-year.

This white paper introduces features and capabilities offered with enclosures with Purcell Systems, including the range of thermal management systems, power efficiency, acoustic management, security and intrusion prevention, and scalability and flexibility. These features and capabilities have a major impact on the total cost of ownership over the life of the deployment – typically many years – therefore understanding and leveraging them can result in significant operational expense reductions, as well as increased reliability and longevity.



Notable features and capabilities of outdoor enclosures offered by Purcell Systems, and relevant to LMR network operators, include the following;

- **Rapid Deployment** – Enclosures can be mounted on existing infrastructure such as concrete pads, poles, walls, or H-frames without building permits. Relative to buildings or shelters, transportation to the site location is simple and installation is completed in less than a day.
- **Thermal Management** – Outdoor enclosures utilize a wide range of heating and cooling technologies to provide a specific operating environment for your commercial-grade electronic equipment.
- **Network Security and Availability** – Network uptime is assured by protecting the equipment from the elements and unauthorized access.
- **Total Cost of Ownership** - Engineering analysis and modeling ensures your enclosure configuration minimizes installation, maintenance, repair, capital, and operational expenses.

## 2. Thermal Management

Most commercial electronic equipment is specified to operate in a – 40 °C to + 65°C range. For electronic components, for every 10 °C rise in temperature, the average reliability is decreased by 50 percent. In terms of Mean Time Between Failure (MTBF), the MTBF will double if the operating temperature is lowered 10 °C. So maintaining your equipment within the manufacturer's recommended temperature range not only reduces your capital reinvestment on equipment by extending its operational life, but also improves the reliability of your LMR network infrastructure.

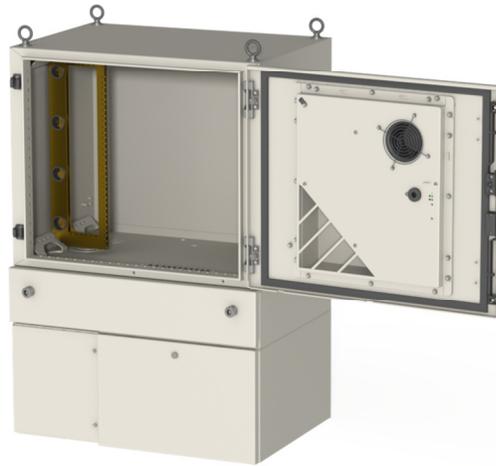
Thermal management systems are available in a number of technologies and performance ranges to accommodate the heat load from contained equipment and solar radiation. The cooling capacity of a thermal management system is commonly measured in Watts per degree Celsius (W/°C) which is defined as  $Q/(T_I-T_A)$  where;

Q : Heat dissipation (W) from inside of cabinet

T<sub>I</sub> : Return temperature of internal air circuit (°C)

T<sub>A</sub> : Ambient temperature of external air circuit (°C)

There are a number of standards and specifications that specify performance of thermal management systems. One such standard used extensively by the telecommunications industry is Telcordia GR-487. GR-487 is based on the foundation that the thermal management system must properly maintain equipment with an outdoor ambient temperature range between -40 and +46°C. This recommendation is applicable to the LMR network operator as well. The design of the thermal management system must take into account the operating temperature range of the enclosed electronic equipment, and address the heat dissipation from that equipment plus the total heat load contribution of solar radiation from exposure to direct sunlight.



*Example of HEX system installed on enclosure door*

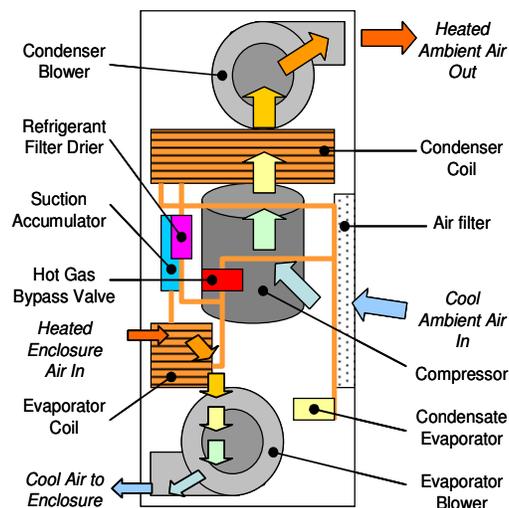
Purcell Systems offers a wide range of thermal system technologies and capacities that allow us to match virtually any thermal management requirement with the optimal combination of technology, performance, reliability and cost. The four most common thermal management technologies Purcell Systems uses for outdoor enclosures are – Direct Air Cooling (DAC), Air-to-Air Heat Exchanger (HEX), Air Conditioning (A/C), and Thermoelectric Cooling (TEC). Listed below are the main characteristics of each of these thermal management technologies.

	<b>Direct Air Cooling (DAC)</b>	<b>Heat Exchanger (HEX)</b>	<b>Air Conditioner (A/C)</b>	<b>Thermoelectric Cooler (TEC)</b>
<b>Closed Loop</b>	No	Yes	Yes or No	Yes
<b>Cool below External Ambient</b>	No	No	Yes	Yes
<b>Extracts Humidity</b>	Limited	No	Yes	Yes
<b>Integrated Heating</b>	No	No	Yes	Yes
<b>Energy Consumption</b>	Low	Low	High	Medium
<b>Acoustic Emissions</b>	Low	Low	High	Low
<b>Failure Rate</b>	Low	Low	High	Low
<b>Repair Cost</b>	Low	Low	High	Medium
<b>Capital Cost</b>	Low	Medium	High	High

**Air Conditioner (A/C)** - A/C offers the highest performance thermal management technology, able to support very high heat loads and cool the interior of the enclosure far below ambient air temperatures. Most A/C units deployed in support of outdoor enclosures are closed-loop systems based on vapor compression cycle where a refrigerant undergoes a change of state (from a liquid to a gas) that absorbs thermal energy from within the enclosure and transfers it to the outdoor air. This process also removes humidity from within the enclosure.

While A/C offers the highest performance cooling, it also comes at a significant price in terms of the relative cost of the technology, high energy consumption, required regular preventative maintenance, and poor reliability and life expectancy, due mainly to many complex components and moving parts operating at high temperatures and pressure.

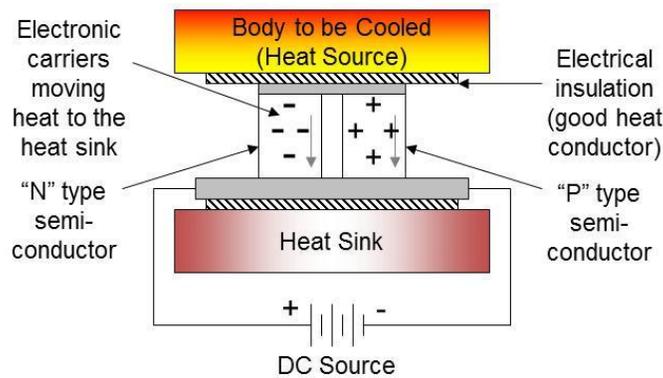
Due to the high-performance capabilities of A/C systems, many outdoor enclosure vendors tend to apply it for all cooling requirements, which typically results in significantly more cooling capacity than what is actually required. When deployed in this manner, A/C systems will have higher than normal failure rates due to short-cycling, higher energy consumption, and create the potential for flash-condensation due to the air temperature inside the enclosure being significantly lower than the humid air outside the enclosure. When the enclosure door is opened in this condition, the much warmer and humid outdoor air comes in contact with the much colder interior surfaces of the cabinet, causing the humidity to instantly condense within the enclosure.



*Components and airflow within an A/C System*

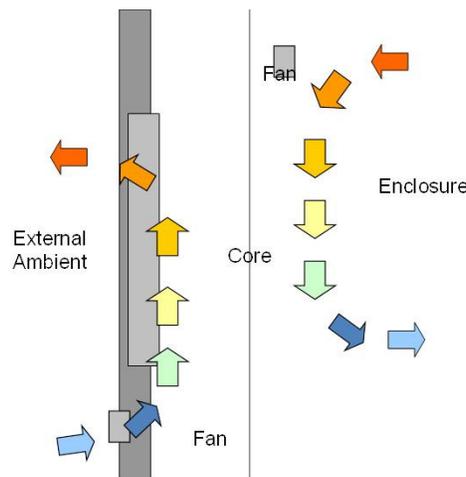
**Thermoelectric Cooler (TEC)** – TEC's use the Peltier-Effect, by which current applied across two dissimilar materials causes a temperature differential. TEC's offer variable and scalable incremental cooling or heating in a compact form factor. TEC's have very high reliability and long life expectancy

because the only moving parts are fans to circulate air. TEC's require no maintenance and consume far less energy to operate than A/C.



*Components and airflow with a TEC System*

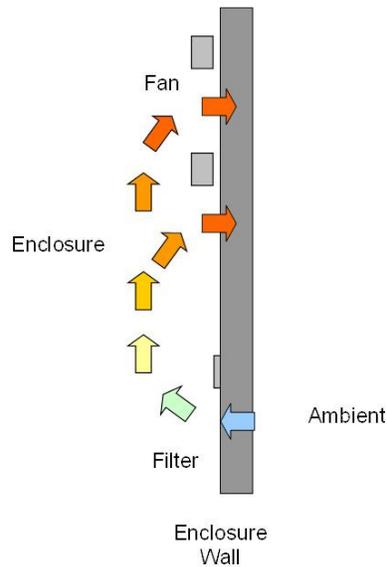
**Heat Exchanger (HEX)** – HEX's provide superior above ambient temperature thermal management. HEX units are closed loop systems meaning that they isolate the outdoor ambient air from the air inside the enclosure. Closed loop systems prevent intrusion of any particulate contaminants, such as dust, moisture and humidity from entering the enclosure. HEX's are highly reliable and have long life expectancy because the only moving parts are the fans to circulate air. HEX's require no maintenance and consume very little energy.



*Airflow with a HEX System*

**Direct Air Cooling (DAC)** – DAC systems provide excellent above ambient thermal management performance. DAC systems are open-loop systems that bring outdoor ambient air into the interior of the

enclosure for cooling purposes. DAC systems typically employ inexpensive mesh filters to prevent particulate contamination from entering the enclosure, or alternatively can also be equipped with high-performance hydrophobic filters that prevent moisture entry into the enclosure. DAC systems are highly reliable and have long life expectancy because the only moving parts are the fans to circulate air. DAC systems consume very little energy.



*Airflow with a DAC System*

Many external factors affect the thermal performance of an outdoor enclosure – primarily the range of seasonal temperatures and humidity, the thermal load produced by the sun, and the thermal load produced by the equipment. More than any other feature, the thermal management system could have the largest impact on the operational expenses. The following parameters should be factored into any thermal management recommendation;

- the range of seasonal temperatures and humidity,
- the thermal load produced by the sun,
- the thermal load produced from each type of enclosed equipment (when fully populated),
- the grouping and segregation of equipment based their range of operating temperatures,
- any restrictions for acoustic emissions, and
- initial capital cost and ongoing operational expense.

When Purcell Systems is presented with a new configuration for an enclosure, we engineer a thermal management solution that optimizes the thermal environment for equipment, and this design will

minimize the total cost of ownership over the lifetime of the enclosure. Note that these engineered configurations use off-the-shelf thermal management systems, so the operator does not pay any engineering fees or experience project schedule increases with these solutions. Factors that affect the design of the thermal management system may include;

**Equipment Segregation into Cooling Zones** – Purcell Systems will engineer the enclosure, and all of its affiliated accessories, to accommodate multiple temperature zones. This design method enables the enclosure to keep one zone at a different temperature than another. By understanding the operating ranges of the groups of equipment in the enclosure, Purcell Systems can design the thermal management system to keep each group of equipment within its specific operating temperature range.

This capability is especially useful for enclosures that house both batteries and electronics. Batteries should be stored as close to room temperature as possible, as any elevated temperatures substantially shorten cycle life. Electronics are more tolerant of higher temperatures, and can operate comfortably between -40 and + 65°C. Typical cooling configurations would be a TEC for the battery zone and a HEX for the electronics zone. Without the application of zone cooling, a common chamber containing batteries would probably need A/C to maintain the required temperature range. Note that zone cooling applies to any configuration that includes equipment with different thermal characteristics, not just configurations with batteries.

The enclosure must support the inclusion of a horizontal insulated partition, as well as the mounting of up to three different cooling systems on the door. The FlexAir™ door from Purcell Systems supports up to three different thermal systems, thus creating three different cooling zones. Purcell Systems analyzes and models the thermal environment of each zone, and can recommend the optimal cooling system that complies with the equipment specifications while minimizing operational cost.



*Zone cooling is supported with the FlexAir™ door.*

**Wide Selection of Thermal Systems, Technologies and Capacities** - Purcell Systems offers a wide range of thermal system technologies and capacities that allow us to match virtually any thermal management requirement with the best combination of technology, performance, reliability and cost rather than simply putting the highest capacity A/C unit that will physically fit each cabinet.

This range of thermal solutions also enables adaptability to changing equipment configurations that result in completely different thermal requirements. It is not necessary to equip the cabinet with the largest thermal management system that will fit only to try and “future-proof” the deployment. Enclosures with incorrectly sized thermal systems lead to high capital expenditure, high failure rates, high energy and maintenance costs, and the potential for reduced equipment reliability and service life.

This adaptability also allows for the cost-effective implementation of newer thermal management technologies and solutions as they become available that may provide significant operational advantages and savings while maintaining the investment in the cabinet solution.

**Power Efficiency** - An often overlooked, but paramount, consideration in assessing outdoor enclosures or cabinets is the power efficiency of the thermal management options offered with the enclosure. The selection of the optimal thermal system, and its affiliated power consumption and cooling capacity, will substantially affect the combined operating and capital costs over the life of the enclosure. Over-engineering the cooling system or selecting an inefficient cooling technology can result in excessive power consumption, increased operational expenses and the potential for premature and increased equipment failures.

**Intelligent Controllers** - A critical consideration when selecting an enclosure thermal management system is an intelligent controller. An intelligent controller, in combination with multiple temperature sensors, should control the operating speed of the air-movers. These variable-speed controllers regulate the air flow, maintain a more even temperature within the enclosure, reduce energy consumption, and reduce acoustic emissions outside the enclosure. An intelligent controller should also provide alarm reporting and communication capabilities for the thermal system.

### 3. Acoustic Management

Minimizing acoustic emissions from fielded enclosures is critical to harmonious relations with communities adjacent to your equipment. The telecom industry complies with the Telcordia GR-487-CORE specification, which is a good benchmark for LMR network operators as well. This specification states that the enclosure must not emit more than 65 dB-A at five feet from the enclosure (while under full operation).

Much like the thermal management design of our enclosures, Purcell Systems can design our enclosure configurations to meet specific acoustic thresholds. By utilizing sound engineering principles and decades of experience with enclosures, Purcell Systems can typically engineer enclosures that are substantially quieter than the industry standard.



*Acoustic management becomes critical when LMR base stations encroach on residential neighborhoods.*

When assessing enclosures, there are several features which can assist in minimizing acoustic emissions;

**Sound-absorbing material** should be installed around the air plenums and vents within the cooling systems and the enclosure.

**Vibration decoupling** is a structural principle applied to any moving parts. Vibration decoupling means that any moving or rotating part is mounted to a fixture which is firmly attached to the enclosure base or foundation. As an example, vibration decoupling discourages having a first fan mounted to the base of a second fan.

**Variable speed fans and intelligent controllers** are used to minimize oscillations and subsequent noise emissions (as well as power consumption).

**Multiple vents** will reduce noise emissions by diffusing the noise in multiple directions, rather than maximizing the noise emissions along just one plane.

**Zone cooling** contributes to a lower acoustic signature as more, smaller thermal systems are deployed with a single enclosure. Each system is of a lesser capacity than a single monolithic system, and each typically has a lower duty-cycle since they manage a smaller thermal load.

#### 4. Security and Intrusion Prevention

Security is a critical concern for any LMR network operator. Unauthorized access to equipment can quickly lead to network downtime, and critical communication. Purcell Systems offers numerous features that provide uncompromising security.

**Interior Door Hinges** – Hinges on all access doors should be only accessible from inside the enclosure, and reside inside the exterior gasket area of the enclosure so they are protected from exposure to the elements. The hinge should not be accessible when the door is closed. Unlike interior hinges, exterior hinges can be easily knocked off the enclosure, thus allowing the removal of the door and access to the

enclosure interior. Exterior piano hinges can easily be defeated with a hacksaw, allowing door removal and access to the enclosure interior as well

**Door Latches and Frame** – All exterior doors should be locked with a multi-point latching mechanism to ensure that all door corners and edges are secured. Any latching mechanism for the door should be in the enclosure interior. The latching system should also be captive such that when the handle is in the locked position, the latches effectively bond the door to the cabinet. Latches that aren't captive can easily be defeated with a crowbar, screwdriver or other prying instrument. Intrusion by prying the door open can also be prevented with proper design that results in a small gap between the edge of the door and the enclosure frame when the door is latched closed, and a flange along the interior of the door frame.

The door latching hardware and mechanism should be capable of withstanding torque levels, typically 400 in-lbs, without any physical distortion or loss of functionality. In the event that the exterior handle is compromised, the latching mechanism should not be accessible to external tampering, and stays in the locked position.

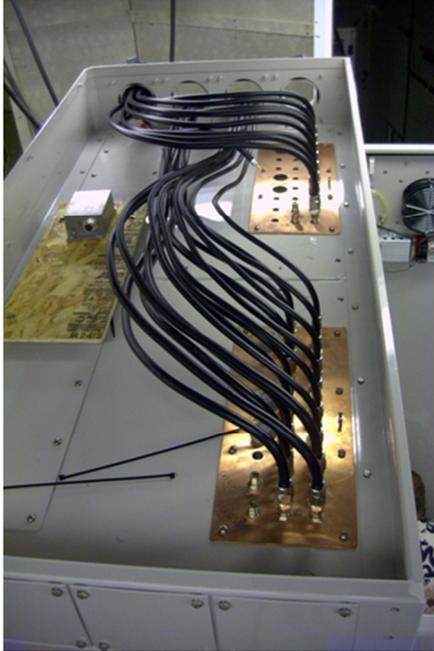
**Firearms Resistance** – Penetration of the enclosure walls by projectiles can cause severe damage to the equipment. Industry standards, such as Telcordia GR-487, specify outdoor enclosures must be capable of withstanding a point blank 12-gauge shotgun blast without penetration of the cabinet wall by any pellets. Additionally, the enclosure should be resistant to a 22-caliber bullet (long rifle, hollow point or standard lead round nose) fired from 50 feet and resistant to a 30-06 caliber (180 grain bullet) fired from 50 yards.

**Intrusion Alarms** - Intrusion alarms should provide signaling to a centralized alarm monitoring center of an unauthorized or unscheduled opening of the door.

## 5. Flexibility and Scalability

The selected enclosure should be able to accommodate your changing application needs and the myriad environments where your equipment is deployed. An enclosure with numerous configuration options enable an operator to standardize on one enclosure model, while providing the flexibility for the different equipment configurations and deployment challenges presented by unique environments. Purcell Systems enclosures are designed with pre-engineered components that offer the ultimate configurability, field upgrades and expansion including additional equipment bays, power and battery backup, and thermal management capacity to meet deployment demands today and tomorrow, without the need for expensive and limited custom development.

**Cable Entry** – Wireless operators typically have antenna cables enter near the top of the enclosure, as well as some backhaul cables exiting through the side or bottom of the enclosure. Cables entering near the top should be organized and distributed through a “cable raceway”.



*Cable raceways distribute antenna cables across the top compartment of the enclosure.*

**Vertical Stacking** – Shorter enclosures should offer vertical stacking features or mounting on a raised plinth for easier access. The main benefit of vertical stacking is adding capacity without increasing the depth or width of the footprint, thus maximizing real estate. If multiple enclosures are to be stacked, then an adapter plinth is needed in between the enclosures, or the top and bottom of the enclosure must have aligned bolt patterns to enable joining. Another key consideration is meeting seismic zone requirements when enclosures are stacked.



*Shorter enclosures should be designed so they can be vertically stacked.*

**Horizontal Expansion** – The enclosure architecture should accommodate the horizontal expansion of enclosures, typically called a line-up. Features that enable horizontal expansion include aligned bolt patterns for mechanical joining of the adjacent walls and alignment of knockouts on the walls that allow cable pass through between connected bays. P25 Base stations may require multiple enclosures - one for the routers, switches, and firewall equipment (i.e. site interface cabinet), a second for trunking repeaters (i.e. station cabinet), and a third for Rx multi-couplers and Tx combiners (i.e. RF equipment cabinet).



*Enclosures should be designed so they can be horizontally stacked into line-ups*

**Field Upgrades of Thermal Systems** – Thermal systems can be door, side, or roof mounted. Purcell Systems prefers to mount thermal system solutions to enclosure doors. This allows maximum flexibility to adjust the capacity of the thermal solution to match the deployed equipment. Quick-release hinges allow fast and efficient changes to the thermal management systems that can typically be accomplished without having to remove the cabinet or electronic equipment from service. Door mounted thermal systems also enable upgrades later to implement zone-cooling, or to take advantage of more efficient thermal technologies as they become available.

**Side Chambers** – Side chambers, which are typically not thermally managed, can be used for many purposes – power termination and distribution (i.e. AC/DC load centers), physical cross-connect of cables, splicing of cables, and craft separation of tasks. Critical features to be considered are; the availability of side chambers for both sides of the enclosure, physical dimensions, NEMA Ratings (3R minimum recommended), the degree of Ingress Protection (IP) rating, cable entry seals and glands, three-point locking mechanisms, options for a secondary grounding bar, and intrusion alarms.

For LMR network operators, side chambers provide telecom carriers with access to their communication equipment while preventing access to the LMR equipment. Unlike buildings and shelters where service termination is inside the structure, carrier access to their equipment is physically segregated from LMR equipment.



*Side chambers provide easy access to physical cable and power connections, so they can be further distributed into the main compartment*

**Battery Pedestals and Plinths** – As accessories, generic installation plinths with cable entrance provisions and battery compartments are offered for pad mountings. Open air plinths should have accessory wall panels to prevent animal access (i.e. critter guards).

## 7. Conclusion

Outdoor enclosures provide LMR network operators with a cost-effective and quick-install alternative to buildings and shelters. Outdoor enclosures have a lower acquisition cost, and do not require building permits. Transportation of the enclosure and equipment to the base station site can be accomplished with a single truck load. Installation of the enclosure can be completed in one day. LMR Network operators can mount enclosures on existing infrastructure such as concrete pads, poles, walls, or H-frames. The physical footprint of the enclosure is substantially less than a building or shelter. Additionally, the enclosure and equipment can be relocated to a new location if needed.

Thermally-managed enclosures maximize equipment up-time, as well as extend service life by providing an optimal operating environment for the LMR radio equipment. Additionally, ongoing heating and cooling costs can be minimized by selecting the optimal mix of thermal management technologies.

When LMR network operators are considering an upgrade to the P25 network equipment, they should consider outdoors enclosures to house their radio equipment. Outdoor enclosures will reduce their initial capital expenditures, as well as their ongoing operational expenses, and maximize availability of their radio services.

## About Purcell Systems

Purcell Systems designs and manufactures innovative, modular, thermally-managed outdoor enclosure solutions to house electronic equipment. Our outdoor enclosures enable our customer to meet their exact needs for equipment mounting, thermal management, cable management, power and battery backup while saving substantial time, labor, space, capital and operational expense as compared to prefabricated buildings or shelters.

Purcell Systems mission is to reduce ownership and operation cost through industry leading design, quality and on time delivery. Our solutions are deployed by customers in the Cable/MSO, Energy/Utility, Land Mobile Radio/Public Safety, Transportation, U.S. Government/Military and Telecommunication Carrier markets. Purcell Systems provides quality products and services with unmatched speed, flexibility, and 24/7/365 Fanatical Service®. Our commitment to on-time delivery, product quality, unmatched customer support and performance to our commitments has resulted in rapid growth and continuous improvement to our capabilities and service offerings.

Founded in January 2000 in Spokane, Washington, USA, and with offices and design centers located in Stockholm, Sweden and Mielec, Poland, Purcell Systems has become a global leader in thermally managed outdoor enclosures with production facilities strategically located around the world.

Using sophisticated engineering analysis, modeling and validation, and with a deep understanding of all aspects of our customers' deployment challenges, Purcell Systems solutions provide the lowest total cost of ownership.

- Product cost
  - Low first deployment and expansion cost
  - Highly configurable, modular solutions using pre-engineered components
  - Common interchangeable components utilized across multiple enclosures
- Installation cost
  - Small footprint minimizes real estate cost – typically less than 3 square feet per enclosure
  - Inexpensive to transport to any site via small truck, ship, rail or air
  - Flexible deployment options: mobile or fixed – pole, wall, H-frame, roof or pad
- Operational cost
  - Low energy consumption through analysis of thermal management requirements and implementation of the most efficient thermal management solution(s)
  - Wide range of heating and cooling system solutions – Direct Air Cooling, Heat Exchangers, Thermoelectric Cooling, Air Conditioning, Zone Cooling
  - Designs for high reliability, minimal maintenance and quick repair for all environments
  - Field upgradeable solutions to add equipment mounting space, thermal management and battery backup

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