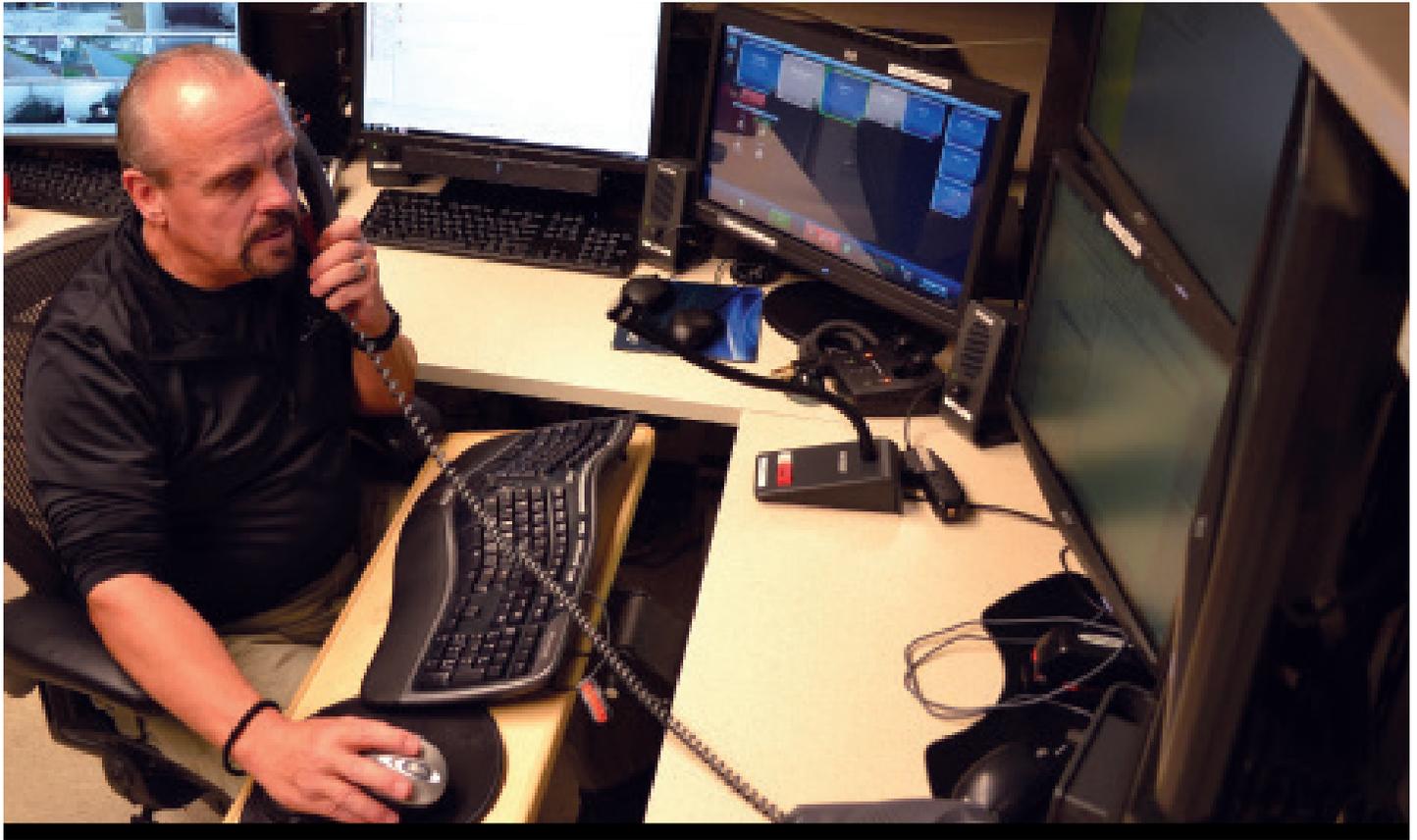


Case Study

Location: University of Oregon

Product: MAX Dispatch



MAX Dispatch Goes to College!

The University of Oregon campus police department's new MAX Dispatch system improves their interoperability and also gives them the flexibility to dispatch remotely from campus events that require a police presence.

Crime is not the first thing most of us would typically associate with an institution of higher learning. But Lynn Wilborn says minor crimes such as underage drinking and petty theft are a daily fact of life at the University of Oregon—as they are at most colleges and universities. And she ought to know; she's the law-enforcement communications and records manager at the University of Oregon's newly created campus police department. "High-tech devices are particular favorites of those with light fingers," she says. "If a student studying in the library momentarily gets up and leaves a cell phone or iPad on their study table, chances are the device will be gone by the time the student gets back."

To improve the university's ability to respond effectively to law-enforcement issues, the school recently began transitioning its public-safety department to an actual police department. At the same time, they also decided to replace their aging dispatch equipment with Zetron's IP-based MAX Dispatch system. The new system offers numerous advantages over their old system, including improved interoperability and the ability to dispatch remotely when events require it.

The University of Oregon

Located in Eugene, a city in Oregon's Willamette Valley, the University of Oregon is a public university with a student body of approximately 25,000. It has been classified by the Carnegie Foundation as a very high research activity (RU/VH) university, the highest classification for an academic institution. It is also one of only two Association of American Universities (AAU) members in the Pacific Northwest.

Improving campus safety and security

Previously, the University of Oregon's safety and security were overseen by its public safety department. Recently, however, the Oregon Legislature changed state law to make possible the creation of campus police departments. This allows the University of Oregon to be on par with every other AAU institution and nearly every other school in the country with 15,000 or more students.

A major advantage to being a police department is that it improves access to law-enforcement information that officers, dispatchers, and analysts use to respond to incidents and trends, investigate crimes, and craft effective prevention strategies.

"Being able to share data, work with our law-enforcement peers, and act quickly greatly improves our ability to protect and serve our campus effectively," says Interim Police Chief Carolyn McDermed.

New dispatch equipment

Although the decision to replace the police department's dispatch system wasn't directly related to the agency's upgrade in status, it was a change they sorely needed—their existing Zetron button-based console was almost 25 years old.

"The Zetron console had served the campus well," says the university's senior RF engineer, Mike Smith. "But it was becoming antiquated, and parts were getting hard to find. Plus, there were some things we really wanted that the old system couldn't provide. We wanted to be able to add positions easily and inexpensively. We also wanted to be able to run remote dispatch positions at campus events."

Reasons for choosing MAX

The university issued a request for proposals for a new IP-based dispatch system, and after considering a number of systems, they chose Zetron's MAX Dispatch. Smith explains why.

"For one thing, we had a budget, and the MAX system fit it," he says. "I also have a long history with Zetron products, and I've always been impressed by their engineering and performance. In addition, MAX integrates well with Kenwood products, so it would be able to support the campus's existing Kenwood radio infrastructure. And I liked the migration path from current to newer technologies Zetron presented to me."

Both Smith and Wilborn say that the MAX system's interoperability was also a key factor.

"The campus police department has to be able to utilize three different radio networks on campus," says Smith, "a P25 [Project 25] system that the campus police use, and analog conventional and trunking systems other campus entities use. MAX supports them all."

"Because of its patching capabilities" adds Wilborn, "the MAX system would also allow our regular officers who use digital radios and our auxiliary officers who use analog radios to talk to each other."

The solution

The MAX Dispatch system the university chose includes five positions: two positions for primary dispatch—with a third to be added after they move to a larger space; another position for backup; and a laptop-based position for remote dispatch.

Easy migration

The implementation of the new system was straightforward, smooth and didn't interrupt the agency's ongoing operations. "I installed the console system and other necessary equipment in a room adjacent to the one where normal operations were taking place," says Smith. "Then I just shut off the old system and turned on the new one."

"The transition to the new system was seamless," says Wilborn. "We just went from one system to the other."

'A huge improvement'

The system has been live since late June, and according to Wilborn, it is "...working great. It's a wonderful upgrade for us. Mike [Smith] did a great job setting it up."

Smith appreciates the system's reliability: "Even though it's relatively new," he says, "once it was installed, I was able to take a vacation to Hawaii, and I didn't get a single call!"

But perhaps the most important review of the system comes from Tyler Maness, one of the dispatchers who uses it daily. He's particularly fond of the system's intelligent user interface: "The MAX screen is very flexible," he says. "It lets us change things around and display them exactly the way we want to. It's a huge improvement over what we had before!"

The upshot is that University of Oregon not only has a police department that is improving its campus law-enforcement capabilities, but also a dispatch system that is able to provide the technological support these expanded capabilities require.



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