

## Case Study

Location: Appalachian State University    Product: MAX Dispatch



Photo credit: Marie Freeman, University Communications



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# MAX Dispatch Scores a Touchdown at Appalachian State University!

*The police department on the campus of Appalachian State University recently upgraded to Zetron's MAX Dispatch system. MAX Dispatch was chosen for its cost-effectiveness and end-to-end IP functionality as well as its support for remote and backup dispatching.*

There are good reasons why many universities have their own campus police departments. For one thing, even institutions of higher learning are not immune from the public-safety and law-enforcement issues that arise in any community. Campus populations also include a high percentage of students in their late teens and early twenties who tend to engage in exuberant activities that are typical of their age group—especially on Friday and Saturday nights. Universities also host events that draw sizeable crowds—fans packing a college football stadium on a Saturday afternoon can number in the tens of thousands.

For all of these reasons and more, the police department on the campus of Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina, has an important role to play when it comes to protecting the safety and security of its students, staff, and visitors. That's why the agency recently decided to replace their outdated, decades-old dispatch system with a new one. With the help of their long-time radio equipment provider, High Country Communications, they

installed Zetron's MAX Dispatch system. The new system not only offers expanded functionality and end-to-end IP, but will allow them to dispatch from remote and backup sites whenever they're ready to make use of that capability.

### **A top-ranked university**

Located in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina, Appalachian State University is a public, co-ed institution that is consistently ranked among the top colleges in the nation by publications such as *Time* magazine, *U.S. News & World Report*, *Kiplinger Personal Finance* magazine, and *Forbes*. The university is also known for the success of its football team; they won three consecutive NCAA Division I national championships from 2005 to 2007.

### **Police operations and communications**

The Appalachian campus police department's jurisdiction comprises the main campus and its 21 residence halls as well as university facilities throughout Watauga County, where the main campus is located.

Sandra Evans, the support services manager for the campus police department, explains some of the reasons why they decided to install a new dispatch system. "Our existing system was aging and we were no longer able to obtain replacement parts," she

says. "Our audio transmissions were also sometimes unclear and garbled, so it was hard for our dispatchers and officers to hear each other."

To remedy these problems, the agency issued a request for proposals for a new dispatch system. Zetron reseller, High Country Communications, won the project with a proposal based on Zetron's MAX Dispatch system. High Country Communications designs, integrates and maintains two-way radio, E9-1-1, and single-site and wide-area communications systems for customers throughout North Carolina and Tennessee. Their proposal included two workstations; four IP radio gateways; and for redundancy, two controllers.

### Built for IP

High Country Communications president, Chris Bertolini, says MAX Dispatch was a good choice for the Appalachian campus police department. "MAX Dispatch will be well supported, easy to use and provide more reliable transmissions," he says. "It is also designed and built for IP functionality. In many so-called IP consoles on the market, IP integration is an add-on to a product that wasn't originally engineered to be IP-based. Those consoles can connect to a network, but they're built on old technology. Zetron's MAX Dispatch, on the other hand, is designed from the ground up to be pure end-to-end IP. So while other consoles offer IP network connectivity as an afterthought, MAX Dispatch provides true, state-of-the-art IP design and functionality."

"MAX Dispatch also offers a better return on investment more quickly than other systems," Bertolini continues. "Other systems don't become cost effective until you install four or five positions. MAX Dispatch is cost effective even with just one or two positions."

### Prior planning ensures a smooth install

Planning and preparation are important aspects of any dispatch system installation, and the project for Appalachian was no exception.

High Country Communications staged and tested the system at their offices before moving it to its final destination on the university campus. High Country's technicians also performed the necessary re-wiring at the customer's site before the final install.

Bertolini says that the thoroughness of these preparations, combined with the excellent training Zetron gave his technicians

and the system's inherent ease of installation all made it an extremely smooth implementation. "The installation took only a day," he says. "All we had to do was plug things in."

Evans concurs: "We had no downtime whatsoever," she says, "and our dispatchers took to it very quickly." The MAX Dispatch system went live in July of 2012.

### Statewide interoperability

One important feature of the Appalachian campus police department's MAX Dispatch system is its ability to connect to the North Carolina State Highway Patrol's statewide Voice Interoperability Plan for Emergency Responders network. "The MAX system is able to interface with the network through the police department's radios," says Bertolini. "This enhances the MAX system's considerable interoperability even further."

### 'A good direction for the future'

It's been nearly a year since the Appalachian campus police department switched over to their new MAX Dispatch system, and Sandra Evans reports that she's very pleased with its performance and functionality. "Our transmissions are clear and dependable, and our dispatchers really like it, especially the instant recall recorder," she says. "The system is also very reliable and very well supported, which we appreciate."

"Looking forward," she adds, "we'll be able to dispatch from major events like football games or a backup location if we ever have to evacuate our office. These are important capabilities we aren't using yet. But we soon will be. It's a good direction for the future."



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