Making One of America’s Safest Cities Even Safer

Zetron’s MAX Dispatch and Call-Taking Deliver Efficiency over IP

With their new Zetron MAX Dispatch and Call-Taking systems, the Mundelein, IL, PD has a single-vendor solution that is improving their efficiency, preparing them for the future, and helping ensure that Mundelein maintains its status as one of the safest cities in the U.S.

If you want to live in a safe community with a low crime rate, the village of Mundelein, Illinois, may be the place for you. It was recently rated one of the 100 safest cities in the nation by NeighborhoodScout.com, a company that uses FBI and law-enforcement data to rate the safety of communities throughout the U.S. In fact, Mundelein came in as the country’s 56th safest city. Their recent installations of Zetron’s IP-based MAX Dispatch and MAX Call-Taking systems might make them even safer. That’s because the solutions’ streamlined user interfaces, ease of operation, and updated features allow dispatchers to respond more quickly and accurately whenever someone in Mundelein dials 9-1-1.

Although Mundelein covers an area of only about 10 square miles, with a population of roughly 31,000, it is larger than its designation as a village would seem to suggest.

Mundelein 9-1-1
The Mundelein 9-1-1 call-taking and dispatch center is housed in the police department and serves as the public safety answering point (PSAP) for the village. “We’re a full-time, full-service call-taking and dispatch center,” says Mundelein Police Department communications supervisor, Mike O’Brien. “We average about 8,000 9-1-1 calls per year. Because the police department is always open, we also answer after-hours calls for public works, the village hall, and other village services.”

New equipment for Mundelein
O’Brien says that over the last few years, there was a growing realization that Mundelein would have to install new emergency call-taking and dispatch systems because their existing equipment was reaching its end of life. “It was no longer supported, so we knew we’d have to replace it sooner rather
than later,” he says. “Plus, with Next-Gen 9-1-1 and the recent advances in technology, we needed something that would equip us for the changes we know are coming.”

**Finding the right solution**

To become acquainted with current public-safety communications solutions, O’Brien began researching equipment and viewing product demonstrations at trade shows. That’s where he first saw Zetron’s MAX Dispatch and MAX Call-Taking systems.

O’Brien says that although he and other decision makers reviewed several vendors’ equipment, they preferred Zetron and its IP-based MAX systems from the start. “We were impressed with Zetron’s reliability, reputation and high levels of customer satisfaction,” he says. “They have a great track record throughout the industry. Plus, our fire department uses an older Zetron dispatch system that’s still working well. This is the kind of reliability we need.”

Another important consideration was Zetron’s ability to provide both call-taking and dispatch systems. This presents dispatchers with a consistent look and feel across equipment and helps them complete tasks more quickly and automatically. It would also result in a “single-vendor” solution. “Of the vendors we contacted, Zetron was the only one able to provide both call-taking and dispatch,” says O’Brien. “We like this because we only have one manufacturer to call if we ever need to. For all of these reasons, we went with the Zetron systems.”

**About Radicom**

Zetron reseller, Radicom, was chosen to install the new equipment. Based in McHenry, Illinois, Radicom has been in business for a half-century. Their primary focus is providing and supporting advanced two-way-radio and telephone solutions to commercial and public-safety customers throughout Northeastern Illinois and Southeastern Wisconsin.

**The importance of interoperability**

The project for Mundelein involved installing five positions each of Zetron’s MAX Dispatch and MAX Call-Taking. The dispatch system would be integrated with the center’s existing computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system and logging recorder, as well as Lake County’s EDACS radio network. It would also connect to the State of Illinois P25 radio network, which provides interface capabilities and access to multiple groups and unit IDs. Integration with the EDACS network would ensure interoperability between Mundelein and other county agencies.

Radicom executive vice president and chief operations officer, Bob Lueders, explains why interoperability is so important and how Zetron solutions support it. “Zetron has developed interfaces for all of the major radio manufacturers. As a result, Zetron dispatch systems allow agencies using radio equipment from different manufacturers to interoperate with each other. Without this capability, it can be difficult for different agencies to communicate and coordinate efforts during a major event.”

**Running in parallel**

Lueders says that to install Mundelein’s new equipment, Radicom technicians set up several positions at a time and ran the new systems in parallel with the existing equipment as extra insurance during the installation process. They also had to make sure that the software versions being used in the new systems were in sync with each other so the interfaces and functions dispatchers were using would be consistent across all of the equipment.

Radicom also made sure the screens and controls were set up to support the dispatchers’ needs and preferences.

“The MAX systems give us great flexibility in how we configure the graphical user interface, says Lueders. “It allows customers to provide input on the design of many of their screen elements, including things like how many icons are displayed and how many screens can be open at a given time. As a result, we’re able to customize the screens so they work both functionally and ergonomically for the customer.”

**Dispatcher training**

Radicom provided training on the new systems, working with two to four dispatchers per session to ensure that everyone on each shift was thoroughly introduced to the new equipment.

“When you’re training only a few dispatchers at a time,” says Lueders, “you’re able to provide more personalized attention and bring everyone up to speed more quickly.”

**Exceeding expectations**

Mundelein’s MAX solutions went live in March of 2014, and O’Brien is enthusiastic about the benefits they’re delivering thus far. “The new equipment has exceeded expectations,” he says. “We got everything we were promised, including the integration with our existing systems and the Lake County network. Both Radicom and Zetron made sure that everything was done well and done right, and that the process was as stress free as possible. The project not only met all of our goals, but it’s giving us features we’d never guessed would be as important and helpful as they are.”

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**About Zetron**

Zetron helps public safety agencies deliver advanced communications solutions, supporting advanced two-way-radio and telephone solutions to commercial and public-safety customers throughout the United States. Zetron’s MAX Dispatch and MAX Call-Taking systems, based on a standards-based architecture, support the dispatchers’ needs and preferences, enabling them to complete tasks more quickly and automatically.

Zetron is the recognized leader for computer-aided dispatch (CAD) and radio systems, providing interoperability among radio manufacturers. Zetron’s comprehensive approach improves public safety agency productivity and accountability in delivering lifesaving services.

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