



Dispatcher Brad Easton monitors multiple screens at the 9-1-1 Center in Easton, MA.

MAX Dispatch Supports Consolidation; Provides Reliable, Remote Ops over IP

MAX Dispatch is not only making it easier for the Easton, Massachusetts, 9-1-1 Center to adjust to a recent consolidation, but it will allow them to run reliable, remote positions over IP.

At first, Easton, Massachusetts, Police Chief Allen Krajcik wondered whether an IP-based dispatch system would be able to deliver the reliability he needs. As the director of Easton's public safety answering point (PSAP) and dispatch center, he knows that reliability is a keystone requirement of the systems he oversees. And like many PSAP directors who've been using analog radio equipment for decades, he simply didn't know whether IP-based technology could be trusted to deliver the reliable performance he'd come to expect from his analog equipment.

Nevertheless, when he called for proposals for a new dispatch system to equip his center, Zetron's IP-based MAX Dispatch won the day. And ever since the system went live in early 2013, Captain Krajcik hasn't looked back. Not only is he pleased with the system's features, reliability, and ease of use, but he's looking forward to utilizing new functionality he could never have considered with an analog system.

Classic New England

Easton, Massachusetts, is a classic New England town about 30 miles south of Boston. With its colonial-era buildings, quaint downtown, and surrounding farms and parklands, Easton offers a pace of life that many city dwellers yearn for. Indeed, its charm, above-average median income, and family-friendly amenities have repeatedly earned it a place on CNN *Money's* annual list of Best Places to Live.

Expanding to support consolidation

Until recently, Easton's fire and police departments each handled their own dispatching duties. In 2012, however, they began making plans to consolidate both departments' dispatching into

a single center. This would allow them to use their resources more efficiently and cost-effectively. But it also meant that the dispatching resources and radio channels each department had been handling separately would all be combined into a single system. "Adding so many fire and mutual-aid channels would take us beyond our existing system's capacity," says Krajcik. "So we decided to go out for bid for a new system that would have the capacity to support our new structure."

Greater benefits, lower cost

Krajcik issued a request for proposals (RFP) for a new dispatch system, and several vendors responded. One proposal submitted by Zetron reseller, Comtronics Wireless Communications, featured Zetron's MAX Dispatch system.

Based in Quincy, Massachusetts, Comtronics Wireless Communications provides two-way radio and wireless communications solutions for public safety customers throughout New England. Comtronics sales representative, Vince Mascio, explains why Comtronics based their proposal on the MAX Dispatch system.

"We felt that MAX Dispatch was the best fit for Easton," he says. "It would allow us to offer them greater benefits at a lower cost than any of the other vendors who responded to the RFP. That's a hard combination to beat."

Multiple redundancies

But what about Krajcik's doubts that an IP-based system would be able to deliver the reliability he needs?

“ [W]e now have the option to run a position on a tablet PC or laptop. It will give us full functionality and total control of all of our channels and resources—over IP.

Allen Krajcik
Chief of Police, Easton, MA

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The Wayne County courthouse in Wayne, West Virginia.

Wayne County's MAX Dispatch Supports Statewide Network and Mobile Ops over IP

Wayne County, West Virginia's new MAX Dispatch system connects them to West Virginia's statewide radio network, supports remote operations, and can also be accessed remotely for easy maintenance and repairs. It offers the ease of use dispatchers need and the reliability and bottomline benefits administrators require.

Until recently, the consolidated public-safety answering point (PSAP) and dispatch center at Wayne County, West Virginia, was housed in a cramped office that was barely big enough for its dispatchers. So it was a welcome development when, in about 2011, a number of factors converged to make the agency's move to a new site possible.

Over the next year and a half, administrators found a new facility and had it rebuilt and refurbished to public-safety standards. They also expected to equip it with an updated version of their analog dispatch system. Things didn't turn out that way.

New center, new equipment

Wayne County's public-safety communications consolidated into a single agency back in 1997. At that time, they also installed the Zetron button-based dispatch system that they continued to use for the next 16 years—a long and respectable run for a dispatch system. But when they realized that their move to a new facility was also an opportunity to update their dispatch system, they decided to take it. They enlisted the help of their long-time equipment and service provider, Lab-Tronics, to help select and install what they assumed would be a new analog dispatch system.

Outstanding service

Based in Catlettsburg, Kentucky, Lab-Tronics, provides communications solutions for public-safety customers throughout West Virginia and eastern Kentucky.

"Lab-Tronics was a natural choice for us," says Wayne County Operations Supervisor, Jim Cooper. "They've been our vendor for a number of years, and they've been very reliable and on time with everything we've wanted them to do. Their service is outstanding."

The decision to go with IP

Cooper explains how serendipity intervened to make a move from analog to IP-based dispatch technology an attractive and viable option.

"We'd expected to go with a new version of our existing Zetron system because we were happy with it," says Cooper. "But construction delays at the new facility gave us time to rethink this choice. Zetron had just released its MAX Dispatch system, and we liked its flexibility and state-of-the-art functionality as well as the options IP would give us. Lab-Tronics also thought MAX Dispatch would be a good match for us and encouraged us in that direction."



If lightning strikes—a third time!

One concern for Wayne County 9-1-1 was that, over the years, they had suffered two serious lightning strikes. They needed to know that, if they were ever to experience another strike or other debilitating situation, replacement parts for any dispatch system they installed would be easy to obtain and quick to deploy.

They discovered that, not only are replacement parts for MAX Dispatch readily available, but Zetron ships parts quickly, especially in an emergency, and by overnight express if necessary. In addition, because MAX Dispatch is IP-based, Lab-Tronics would be able to diagnose and service the system remotely. This meant that maintenance and repairs that used to take hours to complete could be handled in a matter of minutes.

After considering this and other key factors, Wayne County decided that IP-based MAX Dispatch would be their new system.

Staging and implementation

Lab-Tronics began the installation in early December of 2012 by staging the system at their shop. This gave them a chance to iron out issues and test the system thoroughly before taking it to the customer's site. They then took it to the dispatch center for its final installation.

"The MAX Dispatch setup was pretty simple," says Lab-Tronics technician, D'Wayne Johnson. "It's computer based, so instead of the hardwiring analog systems require, the MAX system mostly involves networking and software. Our company's experience with computers and networking and the MAX Dispatch training I took out at Zetron's headquarters all helped. The install went very smoothly."

The SIRN

One key requirement of the new dispatch system was that it had to be integrated with the PSAP's five Kenwood radios and West Virginia's State Interoperable Radio Network (SIRN). The SIRN is the result of a collaborative effort by West Virginia's state, county, and municipal public-safety entities to establish and maintain a statewide interoperable radio network for emergency services. It provides coverage for most of West Virginia.

"We set up the MAX Dispatch system so it works with the Kenwood P25 radios and allows the dispatchers to steer radios for the SIRN's multiple talk groups," says Johnson. "It also allows dispatchers to change channels without leaving their desks. This is important because they might find it necessary to change channels at any time, but having to leave their consoles during a hazardous situation could mean loss of time, even loss of life."

'We all win'

Wayne County's MAX Dispatch system was completed and went live in late December of 2012. The customer and reseller are both happy with it for reasons that overlap but reflect their respective concerns.

Technician D'Wayne Johnson like the system's remote-maintenance features. "If there's an issue, or they want to make a change," he says, "I can remote into the system from a computer at my desk instead of having to drive out there and back. This allows us to deliver excellent response times and saves them money. We all win. Also, although I initially thought high traffic volumes might compromise the system's audio quality, it's been fine, even during high activity. The audio is good, and heavy use doesn't affect it at all."

Jim Cooper appreciates MAX Dispatch's IP capabilities. "The system makes it easy for us to establish a mobile command post that will connect over IP back to the main building," he says. "This will give us an important connection between the command post and the main center when we're dispatching onsite at an event or incident."

Wayne County 9-1-1 and Emergency Operations Director, William Willis, is happy with many aspects of the system, but those he emphasizes are its reliability and its impact on the agency's bottomline. "What I like most is that the system just sits there and runs and requires very little maintenance," he says. "As the administrator and the guy with the pocketbook, that's what's important to me." ■

“The system makes it easy... to establish a mobile command post that will connect over IP back to the main building.”

Jim Cooper,
Operations Supervisor, Wayne County 9-1-1

Award-Winning PSAP Sharpens Its Edge with MAX Call-Taking

With its i3 readiness, streamlined UI, and support for remote positions, Zetron's MAX Call-Taking system is keeping Keokuk County 9-1-1 at the forefront of public-safety communications technology.

If you're a dispatcher at the small public-safety answering point (PSAP) in Keokuk County, Iowa, extreme multi-tasking is a way of life. You not only answer 9-1-1 calls and dispatch first responders to the scene, but you also handle administrative phone traffic and jail operations and attend to jail inmates. And where you used to answer calls and dispatch for either fire or police, because of a recent consolidation, you now do both.

On any given day, you might be doing your routine tasks when a large-scale incident occurs, and you're slammed with a deluge of 9-1-1 calls. It's up to you to keep your cool, answer calls, and dispatch first responders as quickly and efficiently as possible.

It's a tall order. That's why intuitive, easy-to-use equipment is so important. The easier the equipment is to use, the easier it is for you to answer calls and send help where it's needed.

Keokuk County's newly installed Zetron's MAX Call-Taking system is indeed helping its dispatchers manage their workload more effectively. With its i-3 readiness and remote capabilities, it's also positioning Keokuk County for the future and helping them maintain their edge as one of the most technologically advanced PSAPs in the state.

APCO award winner

A small county in the southeastern Iowa, Keokuk covers about 580 square miles and has a population of approximately 10,500. Even though this equates to only about 18 residents per square mile, Keokuk County is every bit as proactive and proud of its public-safety communications as any urban or suburban PSAP. And they do indeed have something to be proud of—in 2012, Keokuk County 9-1-1 received the Telecommunicator of Year Award from the Iowa Chapter of the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO).

Time to upgrade

Several years ago Keokuk 9-1-1 started looking for a new emergency call-taking system. Not only was their existing system becoming increasingly difficult to repair, but the sheriff and PSAP administrators felt the time had come to upgrade to a more up-to-date system. "We wanted a system that would support our consolidation, offer more current functionality, and fit our plan to keep our technology current," says Keokuk County Sheriff, Casey Hinnah.

“The MAX UI is amazingly innovative and flexible.”

Duane Vos, Sales Technician, RACOM

'Never any doubt'

Keokuk County administrators did their homework. They toured a number of PSAPs to get an idea of what was available and to see several solutions in action. They then issued a request for proposals (RFP).

Although several vendors responded, Keokuk County's long-standing equipment and service provider, RACOM, won the project with a bid based on Zetron's IP-based MAX Call-Taking system.

Based in Marshalltown, Iowa, RACOM has offices throughout the upper Midwest. They design, install, and maintain communications equipment for public-safety customers throughout their region.

Keokuk County Chief Dispatcher, Dick Coffman, explains why RACOM and Zetron were chosen for the project: "RACOM is an excellent provider. They're very responsive when it comes to system maintenance and proactive in helping us keep our equipment current. Plus, we've had such good experiences with our Zetron dispatch system. There was never any doubt about going with Zetron's IP-based call-taking system."



Flags fly on a street in Sigourney, Keokuk County's county seat.

Combined 9-1-1 and admin capabilities

The solution for Keokuk County would double as both a 9-1-1 call-taking and administrative phone system. "That's another reason why we chose MAX Call-Taking," says Coffman. "It would give us 9-1-1 and admin phones along with voicemail and an auto attendant all in one package. Plus, the phone is cordless, which we need because our dispatchers have to be able to move around the room to do their work."

'No disruption'

RACOM sales technician Duane Vos says that the MAX Call-Taking system was installed parallel to the equipment it was replacing to ensure that the agency would be able to take calls throughout the implementation.

"We installed both the incoming 9-1-1 line and admin lines alongside the old equipment," says Vos. "When the new system was up and running and taking calls and transfers and everything was thoroughly tested, we removed the old system. We did it all with virtually no disruption."

Easy to learn, easy to use

RACOM personnel trained the center's dispatchers on the new equipment. This too went smoothly.

"We have four full-time and five part-time people," says Coffman, "I was worried that once the part-time people were trained, there might be a gap of as much as two weeks before they'd actually use the system. But they learned it quickly, retained what they learned, and have had no problems whatsoever using it."

One-click access

Keokuk County wanted the system's user interface (UI) designed to make it easier for dispatchers to handle agencies that had been added as a result of the consolidation. MAX Call-Taking's award winning UI was able to meet this requirement.

"The MAX UI is amazingly innovative and flexible," says Vos. "It gives operators easy access to all the information and resources they might need for a call just by clicking an icon on the screen."

Coffman and Sheriff Hinnah concur that this has been a great boon to their dispatchers. Both say that their dispatchers love the new UI and its streamlined functionality.

Sharing the love

The MAX Call-Taking system has been in operation for about a year. Sheriff Hinnah and Dick Coffman appreciate the system's immediate benefits as well as those they will be able to use in the future. "The system equips us to handle Next-Generation call-taking when the time comes," says Hinnah. "It also allows us to set up remote positions if and when we want to use that functionality."

"The new MAX Call-Taking system is doing a wonderful job for us; we really like it," adds Coffman. "It automatically provides information in a transfer that our dispatchers used to have to write down by hand. This is so much easier, especially when we get busy. A county called me recently and asked what we think of our MAX system and whether we like it. I told him 'We don't like it...We love it!'" ■

“A county called me recently and asked what we think of the MAX system and whether we like it. I told him ‘We don’t like it...We love it!’”

Dick Coffman

Chief Dispatcher, Keokuk County 9-1-1



Zetron's new MAX Call-Taking gives you the solid reliability and performance you expect from Zetron in a breakthrough, Next Generation 9-1-1 system. MAX Call-Taking is SIP-standards-based, ready to meet i3 industry standards and scalable for multiple PSAPs.

- State-of-the-art UI
- Skills-based routing
- Automatic Call Recovery
- IP-based flexibility
- Stand-alone or hosted design

MAX Dispatch Supports Consolidation; Provides Reliable, Remote Ops over IP

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"Vince explained to us that the MAX system is designed with multiple redundancies, so even if the network goes down, the system will keep running," says Krajcik. "Plus, we have a lot of confidence in Comtronics and Zetron, based on the quality of the products, service and support we've gotten from them in the past. Once we took all of these factors into account, it was pretty clear that MAX Dispatch was the best system for us."

The MAX Dispatch solution for Easton would include a primary position, a secondary position, and a supervisory position. "If they were to have one incident on the fire side and two on the police side, they'd be able to handle them all," says Mascio.

Staging, implementation, and training

The system implementation began as such projects typically do, by staging it first at Comtronics' shop. But it included a twist that was particularly helpful to Mascio and his technicians.

"We were fairly new to MAX Dispatch, so Zetron sent its technical services team to assist with the setup and provide on-site training on the product. So even as my technicians were installing the system, they were being overseen and trained throughout the process by Zetron technicians. This hands-on, real-world approach was the very best kind of training and very convenient for us as well."

Once the staging and testing had been completed, the new system was taken to the customer's site and installed in parallel with the existing console. This was to ensure that if there were any glitches, dispatching operations would continue. But there were no problems; everything went like clockwork. A month later, the old system was removed.

Supporting mutual aid

Mascio explains some of the ways they adapted the MAX Dispatch system to meet Easton's needs.

"Because Easton has many mutual aid departments, they need easy access to the channel resources of each," he says. "MAX Dispatch makes this very intuitive. For instance, we set it up so that when the dispatcher hovers over an icon for Bristol County, it automatically opens up all the mutual aid channels for Bristol

"We've got the newest, most flexible system in the region."

Allen Krajcik, Chief of Police, Easton, MA

County. The dispatcher just has to click on a channel to talk on it. It's very easy and quick, which is critical when you're in the middle of a high-intensity radio call."

Remote ops on laptops

MAX Dispatch was also able to offer a significant benefit that Easton had not anticipated.

"If there's a catastrophe," says Krajcik, "we now have the option to run a position on a tablet PC or laptop remotely. This will give us full functionality and total control of all of our channels and resources— over IP. Along similar lines, our fire chief is planning to use the system on a computer at one of the stations to serve as our Emergency Operations Center during storms."

'It's been great'

Taken altogether, the MAX Dispatch system's increased capacity; its customizable, easy-to-use GUI; and its IP capabilities are providing Easton with a system that has exceeded their expectations.

"It's great; I'm very happy with it," says Krajcik. "It suits us very well and is providing the reliability that is so vital to the services we provide. With the trend toward consolidation, it has also put us in a strong position to lead the way. We've got the newest, most flexible system in our region." ■



MAX Dispatch gives you the solid reliability and performance you expect from Zetron in a breakthrough, IP-based dispatch console system.

- **Intelligent UI:** Highlights information pertinent to the task at hand; reduces information overload.
- **Built-in Network Health Monitor:** Provides constant feedback about network status.
- **Advanced tools:** Streamline installation and minimize field time.
- **Dual connections:** Ensure end-to-end network redundancy.

Zetron Partners with Eventide to Offer Logging Recorder

As a result of a new partnership with Eventide, Zetron can now offer Eventide's NexLog™ logging recorder through Zetron's distribution channels. In addition, NexLog will be integrated with Zetron's MAX Dispatch, MAX Call-Taking and Advanced Communications (Acom) systems to provide customers with a complete, single-supplier incident-management solution. This gives customers the opportunity to purchase a comprehensive system that maintains the integrity of call information from the time the call is received to the point where the incident recordings are retrieved from storage.



APCO International

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Kentucky Emergency Services Conference

September 4 - 6, 2013 | Louisville, KY

NC APCO/NENA

September 8-12, 2013 | Sunset Beach, NC

ZETRON FACTORY TRAINING

Please contact Zetron before scheduling factory training as dates are subject to change.

MAX Call-Taking
September 23 - 27, 2013
October 21 - 25, 2013

MAX Dispatch
October 8 - 11, 2013
November 5 - 8, 2013

Series 2000
October 15 - 17, 2013

Series 4000
October 1 - 3, 2013

The Advantage is published by Zetron, Inc.
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