

## Emergency Dispatch



# New Zetron Dispatch System Readies PSAP for P25

## Cost-Effective Solution Exceeds Customer's Expectations

Lightning can strike the same place twice. And Hampshire County, West Virginia, recently had the singed radio dispatch system to prove it.

After a first debilitating lightning strike in 2006, their equipment was hit again in summer of 2008. The second strike wasn't as damaging as the first, but even after repairs, the system was never quite the same.

There was an upside to the situation, however. Hampshire County was opening a new 9-1-1 communication center, and instead of equipping it with their existing system, which was old as well as damaged, they decided to obtain and install a new one based on Zetron's Series 4000 Communication Control System.

In mid-October, with the help of Kenwood Systems, Custom Computers and Communications, and Zetron, Hampshire County went live with a new, highly integrated, P25-compliant dispatch system in their new 9-1-1 communication center.

### Hampshire County 9-1-1

Before opening its new 9-1-1 communication center, Hampshire County had been contracting a state agency to function as the county's primary public safety answering point (PSAP) for an area covering approximately 641 square miles. The agency's responsibilities had included answering Hampshire County's 9-1-1 calls, as well as dispatching police, fire, and emergency medical services for the county and the municipalities of Romney and Capon Bridge.

But Hampshire County's needs were changing. They decided that the time had come for them to open and operate their own communication center. They also decided to equip the new facility with a new, more reliable, up-to-date dispatch system: "After the lightning strikes, the dispatch equipment was unreliable and full of glitches," explains Ron Runyan, senior systems sales manager for Kenwood Systems' Eastern region. "It was also outdated; some of the equipment was no longer being supported by the manufacturer."

### Finding the right system

Although making the decision to purchase a new system was straightforward enough, finding the right system for the job presented some challenges. Hampshire County found and selected a system they thought would meet their requirements. But when communications with the manufacturer proved unsatisfactory, they had to reverse that decision. They went looking for another system.

"When the first system fell through," says Runyan, "Matt Baker, a sales manager with our manufacturing representative, Great Lakes Communications, contacted us. He thought we might have the solution the customer needed. So Doug Musser of Zetron and I talked with the customer. We then created an equipment list for a cost-effective system that would meet their requirements and integrate with their P25 equipment. We submitted a proposal to them, and this was the system they chose. They issued the purchase order through Kenwood. But we couldn't have done it without Matt"

"Our goal was to find a reliable system that would offer good features and functionality at a reasonable cost, and would be user friendly and easy to service and maintain," says Michael Crouse, Hampshire County's director of emergency management and 9-1-1. "That's what Kenwood and Zetron proposed, and we accepted."

### The new system

The new system included Zetron's Series 4000 Communication Control System with its Model 4048 Common Control Unit (CCU), and four positions of Zetron's Integrator RD Workstation. Two-way radio shop, Custom Computers and Communications, was chosen to help with the installation and to also provide the ongoing local support the customer wanted.

### Custom Computers and Communications

Based in Augusta, West Virginia, Custom Computers and Communications has been in business for nearly 15 years.

"Our clients are primarily public safety and governmental agencies," says Custom Computers and Communications president, Greg Ganoe. "We offer a full range of two-way radio communications and systems services, including full vehicle outfitting for all of the area's law-enforcement agencies. We also maintain the tower sites for Hampshire County and several adjacent counties."

"We were chosen for the project because we were already the service provider for Hampshire 9-1-1," Ganoe continues. "They knew and were happy with us and our work. We're also both a Kenwood dealer and Zetron reseller."

### Implementation, training, and optimization

The new equipment and the customer's radios were all sent to Kenwood's systems sales office in Atlanta, Georgia, where it was assembled and mounted into racks. The racks were then shipped to the customer's location.

"Once the equipment arrived on site, we did all of the cabling and hookup and set all the levels," says Ganoe. "This was our first installation of a Series 4000. But I'd attended Zetron's excellent training on the system, so I knew what was supposed to happen. The installation went very well."

When asked how the operators were trained on the new system, Crouse says that Zetron provided very in-depth training on-site at the new center: "During the training, they also took input from us that was then used to optimize the system to best meet our needs."

### Easy to page, patch, and manage

The system went live October 14, 2008. And Crouse couldn't be more positive: "The project has been a complete success," he says. "We especially like the ease with which we are now able to page, patch, and manage our communications. We got a cost-effective solution that exceeded our expectations. Not only that, we will soon be able to use the new, state-wide UHF P25 radio system. The Zetron system is designed to facilitate our transition to that new technology. It's ready for us to use with the new radio system and our legacy equipment."

At the risk of tempting fate, Ganoe says they have applied lessons learned from their two lightning strikes: "We made sure the new system is so well grounded, it should remain unfazed, even if we do get another lightning strike," he says. ■

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