

Emergency Dispatch



“A Top-Quality System at an Affordable Price”

PSAP Director Touts Series 4000’s Reliability, Cost and Compatibility with Existing Equipment

It’s no small thing when the director of a public safety answering point (PSAP) expresses unequivocal satisfaction with a new radio dispatch system. That’s because PSAP directors know only too well the impact a dispatch system’s performance can have on their agency’s response times and effectiveness.

This is the context within which Craig Lundt’s comments about his agency’s new console system should be viewed. He’s the director of the 9-1-1 center in Forest Park, Illinois. Their new Zetron Series 4000 Communication Control System went live in January of 2009. And he is happy with it.

“The new system exceeded our expectations,” he says. “It’s reliable, stable, and compatible with our existing equipment. With our new Zetron console, we got a top-quality system at an affordable price.”

The Village of Forest Park

The Village of Forest Park, Illinois, is located about 13 miles from Chicago’s central downtown loop. With a population of roughly 16,500, Forest Park has been described as a place that offers both small-town charm and big-city access.

The town’s 9-1-1 call-taking and dispatch center is housed at the police department.

“We take 9-1-1 calls and dispatch police, fire and emergency medical services for Forest Park,” says Lundt. “We handle about 28,000 dispatching calls per year, and last year we took about 50,000 9-1-1 calls.”

A major renovation and upgrade

Lundt explains why it was time to purchase a new dispatch system. “Our existing system was over 20 years old,” he says. “With our call volumes, we needed to upgrade our infrastructure and equipment to ensure

that we'd be able to keep providing high-quality service to our community. So we decided to upgrade from a two-position, button-based system to a three-position, PC-based one. This would be part of a major renovation of our entire radio room."

Mercury Systems Corporation

Forest Park selected Zetron reseller, Mercury Systems Corporation of Naperville, Illinois, to design the updated center and to obtain, install, and maintain the new console system.

Mercury Systems Corporation provides systems sales, design, integration, and maintenance for agencies and PSAPs throughout the Chicago metropolitan area. Their areas of expertise include dispatch room design and all facets of cabled; wireless; and IP voice, data, and video communications.

"We chose Mercury Systems based on both their history of providing us with excellent customer service and their project proposal," says Lundt. "Their proposal addressed all of our requirements and came in well within our budget."

Choosing Zetron

As part of the process of choosing equipment, Lundt visited a nearby PSAP that was already running the Series 4000 and Zetron's Integrator RD PC-based workstations. He was impressed with what he saw and heard.

"They really liked the system," he says. "And I liked a lot of things about it as well. It's reliable, which is number one in a public-safety environment. It has no single point of failure. And it would integrate easily with our existing transmitters and Nextel phones. It also met our requirement for a touch-screen. And because it's easy to program the buttons and screens, I would be able to do that myself and be less dependent on my vendor to make minor changes."

The solution they arrived at for Forest Park included:

- Zetron's Series 4000 Communication Control System with the Series 4048 Common Control Unit (CCU)
- Three positions of Zetron's Integrator RD Workstation
- An iDEN interface to connect to existing Nextel phones

Implementation and training

A Zetron Model 4010 Radio Dispatch Console was used to keep dispatch operations going during the remodel and equipment installation.

"The Model 4010 we'd just bought for the fire department served as our temporary console," says Lundt. "Once the room was reconstructed and remodeled and the furniture was installed, Mercury came in and installed the Series 4000."

Before performing the final installation on site, however, Mercury Systems Corporation first set up and tested the dispatch equipment in their lab.

"This approach shortened the time it took to implement the system in our environment," says Lundt. "There were no major hitches at all."

Training on the new system also went smoothly, despite Lundt's initial concerns that moving to a touch-screen might be a challenge for operators who were used to their push-button consoles.

"After only three training sessions, the operators were very receptive to the new system," he says. "For instance, they like the way the paging is set up. We used to have just one tone box in the communications room. To use it, they had to get up and walk over to it and press a button. Now, they can page from each position. They also like the way the screens are laid out and having the choice to use the touch-screen or mouse. Each position also has access to the Nextel system, which is absolutely phenomenal. They don't have to hunt around the radio room looking for the Nextel; it's part of the console."

Mercury Systems Corporation goes the extra mile

It's not just the equipment Lundt appreciates. He also has high praise for Mercury Systems Corporation.

"Some vendors sell you a system, then don't want to be bothered with you," he says. "But Mercury went the extra mile. They made sure our screens were just the way we wanted them and that we were totally satisfied with the system. They worked very well with us."

Looking toward a single-vendor future

When asked how the system figures into his agency's plans for the future, Lundt says that they are already looking toward the next-generation of 9-1-1 standards.

"Once those standards have been established," he says, "we'll go ahead and upgrade. And we'll certainly look at Zetron's 9-1-1 system. That would give us a single-vendor solution for both our dispatch and 9-1-1. Based on the quality of Zetron's radio console, I'm sure that their phone system would be just as good." ■

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