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Saluda County 911 Center Upgrades Console System and Improves Operations

Saluda County's Emergency 911 center was using dispatching console technology that was more than 20 years old. The antiquated, push-button Time Division Multiplex (TDM) analog system was deteriorating and due to the age of the system, parts were no longer manufactured and support was no longer offered. When a critical power supply unit broke, the replacement part was not readily available and a retrofit to allow the use of a different part would have been very expensive. After research, cost-analysis, and deliberation, the Saluda County

Emergency 911 center determined that upgrading to a modern dispatching console system was more cost effective than replacing the broken unit.

Josh Morton, Saluda County Emergency Management Director, led the upgrade effort and secured funding from the Saluda County Council and received a Regional Healthcare Coalition grant to renovate the center and improve the dispatch console communication system.



New System Requirements

“We were looking for a radio dispatch console system that was easy to use and allows the response center to effectively communicate with corresponding public service entities,” Morton said. “We wanted the capability to patch radio or phone channels together so that responders in the field could communicate with each other regardless of the type of interface used. This was a huge factor in choosing our new system,” he added.

Additionally, Morton wanted to leverage his existing radio infrastructure but without limiting future radio communications upgrades. Morton needed a reliable, computer-based, interoperable communications solution that would connect

to a National Emergency Number Association (NENA) compliant device and an Avaya™ IP Private Branch Exchange (PBX). Avtec's Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) Scout™ console system fulfilled those requirements.

A Smooth Transition

Installation was the next challenge. Because the response center was being renovated with new flooring, furniture, and equipment, coordination among the vendors was important. Over a two-week period, vendors worked on a tightly-regulated schedule to complete their portion of the project. While half of the center was under construction, the other half was up and running, maintaining service to residents.

Seamless migration between dispatching systems was necessary. Following their standard installation process, Avtec sent a project manager and a systems integration engineer to complete their portion of the project on schedule and within budget. Avtec provided onsite training and instruction materials to the dispatchers and according to Morton, the installation went smoothly and without error.

“Avtec was instrumental in implementing our vision. They met and continue to meet our expectations,” said Morton. “Scout is very easy to use and it has a ton of features that our old system simply didn’t have, like patching.”

Avtec’s Scout consoles have improved reliability by providing system redundancy in the event a network connection is interrupted. They also have made 911 operations in Saluda County easier because previously they were unable to patch together phone and radio technologies. The new Scout console system used in conjunction with their Smart911™ and new CAD system with mapping technology has improved communication and emergency response times, helping Saluda County 911 better serve its residents.



Upgrade Solution

- Avtec's Scout™ VoIP Console System
 - Redundant VPGates™
 - Four Avtec Scout dispatch console positions that use footswitches for Push-to-talk functionality and a single Jack Box that routes audio from headset and handset to the console workstation.
 - Three auxiliary Input/Output channels
 - Seven conventional radios (two Kenwood® TK-8102H-1 radios, one Kenwood TK-7102H-1 radio, two Kenwood TK-762HG-1 radios, one Kenwood TK-6110-2 radio, and one Motorola® XTL-5000 radio)
 - Four Outposts™ that convert audio from the phone or radio and send it to the console.
- Valcom® Intercom VIP-172
- VPI digital logging recorder

Telephony

- Airbus DS Communications VESTA® 9-1-1 (NENA i3 standards compliant)
- Avaya™ PBX



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