



MAX Dispatch and Call-Taking Strengthen Link Between a PSAP and Its Community

The new MAX Dispatch and Call-Taking systems recently installed for the Chowchilla, California, Police Department are improving agency operations while delivering the reliable performance the agency had always gotten from its previous Zetron equipment.

Casadi Denny is a woman who knows how to make things happen. Upon being promoted to the position of administrative supervisor for the Chowchilla, California, police department's dispatch and records program, she set an ambitious goal. It was to replace the agency's aging Zetron dispatch and 9-1-1 call-taking systems with new solutions that would be up-to-date and next-generation capable. Although their existing systems were performing reliably and well, demands upon them were bumping up against the limits of their capacity. In an emergency, a public safety answering point (PSAP) is typically the first link between those who need help and those who can provide it. Denny had to be confident that her communications equipment was up to the task.

Last summer, with the help of Zetron and Zetron reseller Delta Wireless, her goal was realized. The PSAP went live with new Zetron MAX Dispatch and MAX Call-Taking systems and Eventide logging recorders.

Not only is the agency now equipped with solutions that provide the reliability necessary to ensure that their link to the community is strong, but the updated technology has streamlined and improved their operations. What's more, 24/7 system service, maintenance, and support from Delta Wireless and Zetron are only a phone call away.

In the center of the Central Valley

The city of Chowchilla is located in Madera County, in the middle of California's Central Valley—a large, flat valley that dominates the geographic center of the state. Although the local economy relies heavily on agriculture, its increasing industrial base has contributed significantly to Chowchilla's rapid growth in recent years. In the 14-year period from 2000 to 2014, its population increased 76 percent.

The Chowchilla PD and PSAP

As the city's primary PSAP and dispatch center, the Chowchilla Police Department Dispatch/Records Program answers emergency 9-1-1 calls and provides dispatching for the city's police and fire departments. They also handle non-emergency telephone calls, greet visitors to the police department, act as the point of contact for other police and public safety agencies, and assist with the maintenance of department records. The PSAP also answers calls for other nearby agencies when their emergency phones go down.

The need to be able to provide reliable backup helped fuel the decision to purchase Chowchilla's new communications equipment.

"We'd been able to take calls for the city and county of Madera whenever their systems went down," Denny explains. "But it was putting a lot of stress on our system. We decided the time had come to update our technology so we'd be able to continue to take calls for the entire county if necessary with no problem."

Going with Zetron

The process of selecting and purchasing the new equipment was fairly straightforward. "Although we really liked our Zetron equipment, we briefly considered a non-Zetron call-taking system Madera County was using then," says Denny. "But when that system failed a few times, our existing Zetron system took up the slack, and I was very impressed with how it handled the call volumes. That clinched it; there was no way I was going with a vendor other than Zetron."

Delta Wireless steps up

The new equipment for Chowchilla included three positions of MAX Call-Taking, two positions of MAX Dispatch, and Eventide IP-based logging recorders that would record call-taking and dispatch transmissions at each position. The purchase was made through Zetron; Delta Wireless was brought in to install the equipment and provide ongoing service and support once implementation was done.

With offices in Atwater, Sacramento, Stockton, and Turlock, California, Delta Wireless provides two-way radio, 9-1-1 phone, and video surveillance systems for customers throughout northern and central California.

Implementation and training

Delta Wireless field service manager, George Gonzalez, oversaw the project for Chowchilla. "The implementation began with staging the equipment in the customer's training room across the street from the police department," he says. "The positions were also set up temporarily in the training room."

Denny was then invited to review and provide feedback on their progress up to that point. "They wanted to make sure my team and I were happy with how everything was laid out and configured, including the dispatchers' screens," she says. "Delta made adjustments based on our feedback. Then they trained me and each of our dispatchers individually."

Putting the new systems in place

When all the preliminary work had been done, the equipment was transported to the police department communication center.

"We put everything in the back room, and set up the two systems side by side," says Gonzalez. "We cut over each phone line and verified that it was working before moving to the next. Once this was done, we moved the radio one channel at a time. We kept the old equipment in place until everything was migrated and verified. Then, when the time came, we shut down the old equipment, pushed the old racks out of the way, moved the new racks in, and secured them in place."

Care and courtesy

Denny says that all throughout this process, Delta Wireless took great pains to complete their work without disrupting the agency's ongoing operations.

"They were very careful and courteous," she says. "If they had to bring something in, and we were on the phone or radio, they were extremely quiet. And if they had to wheel something in, and someone was on a call, they'd wait till until the call was finished before coming in."

'We love the equipment'

The systems went live in September of 2015, so Denny and her staff have had plenty of time to get to know them. "We love our MAX equipment," she says. "It's so easy to use. The icons are laid out so cleanly. We know exactly what we're clicking on. It's very user friendly. And the logging recorder lets me search by lines, caller ID, or by date-time ranges. It helps us retrieve information for court cases that sometimes has a direct impact on the outcome. We also use it as a training tool to review a call and consider whether there might be a better way to handle a similar call next time."

She says Zetron and Delta Wireless are continuing to provide "...excellent customer service. For instance, we were getting static on one of our phones," she says. "So we called Delta, and Delta called Zetron, and the three of us talked. The Zetron tech didn't know what was causing the problem, but he researched it and got back to us immediately. It turned out that we just needed to change a cord. But the point is, it was fixed immediately, and we felt well taken care of."

"Our MAX systems are delivering the same rock-solid reliability and performance we got from our previous Zetron equipment, but with updated technology and functionality," Denny continues. "I'm very happy and very impressed." ■



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www.zetron.com

Zetron Americas

PO Box 97004, Redmond, WA USA 98073-9704

(P) +1 425 820 6363

(F) +1 425 820 7031

(E) zetron@zetron.com

Zetron EMEA

27-29 Campbell Court, Bramley, Hampshire RG26 5EG, United Kingdom

(P) +44 (0)1256 880663

(F) +44 1256 880491

(E) uk@zetron.com

Zetron Australasia

PO Box 3045, Stafford Mail Centre, Stafford QLD 4053, Australia

(P) +61 7 3856 4888

(F) +61 7 3356 6877

(E) au@zetron.com