



MAX Call-Taking Connects Tennessee PSAP to NetTN i3 Network

Zetron Solution Brings Next-Gen to Claiborne County

With Zetron's MAX Call-Taking system, Claiborne County, Tennessee, is Next-Gen-i3 ready and connected to Tennessee's NetTN network.

The move for public-safety agencies to adopt Next-Generation i3 technology is gaining momentum throughout the United States. This transition is necessary for several important reasons. It will allow 9-1-1 centers to receive messages in a variety of formats, including text, photos video and voice. It will also allow agencies to connect to statewide, regional and country-wide Emergency Services IP Networks (ESInets).

With their recent installation of Zetron's MAX Call-Taking system, Claiborne County, Tennessee, is at the forefront of this effort. They are now i3 Next-Gen-ready and connected to NetTN—Tennessee's statewide ESInet.

Claiborne County 9-1-1

Claiborne County is located in northeastern Tennessee, in what is known as the "Ridge and Valley Province" of the Appalachian Mountains.

The Claiborne County consolidated 9-1-1 center is housed in the Claiborne County Justice Center at Tazewell, the county seat. "We serve a population of about 32,000," says Claiborne County 9-1-1 director, Roger Hager. "We handle all 9-1-1 calls and also dispatch for all of the law-enforcement, fire, rescue, emergency-management, and ambulance services in the county."

Why a new system?

Prior to installing MAX Call-Taking, Claiborne County had been using Zetron's Series 3200 Call-Taking system. "The 3200 is a brick," says Hager. "It's the greatest equipment I've ever had. But we needed new equipment in order to connect to our statewide NetTN network. Our existing system would not upgrade to that."

The NetTN network

Tennessee's NetTN network is one of the nation's first, statewide ESInets. It utilizes IP to deliver redundancy and features that analog-based 9-1-1 platforms are not able to provide. In order to connect to NetTN, however, agencies must be equipped to do so. Thankfully, the State of Tennessee is helping with the process.

"Districts throughout the state are upgrading their controllers so they can connect to NetTN and meet upcoming NENA [National Emergency Number Association] i3 standards," says Hager. "This is possible partly because Tennessee's 9-1-1 board has set money aside to help agencies make the transition to the IP-based technology the network requires. Claiborne County was one of the beneficiaries of this program."

Choosing GeoConex and MAX Call-Taking

Once Claiborne County had completed their preliminary planning and had secured the funding necessary to obtain new equipment, they issued a request for proposals (RFP) for a four-position, IP-based call-taking system.

GeoConex and Zetron were awarded the project for a number of reasons, including the quality and technology of the solution GeoConex was proposing, and both companies' ongoing relationships with Claiborne County 9-1-1.

"We currently use GeoConex for our GIS mapping and CAD system," Hager explains. "So we have a long history with them and have been very satisfied with their performance. Plus, their bid included the IP-based Zetron MAX system. MAX Call-Taking would fulfill our i3 Next-Gen requirements, it would deliver the IP features and functionality we need at an attractive price, and GeoConex would provide 24/7 remote and onsite service."

GeoConex president and CEO, Craig Dotson, explains why they based their bid for the project on MAX Call-Taking. "Of all the Next-Gen systems on the market," he says, "MAX Call-Taking is not only the newest, but it's also the best-engineered and most thoroughly thought-out system available. Its redundancy and failover features give it great reliability."

Preparation pays off

MAX Call-Taking was ordered and shipped to GeoConex. GeoConex then set the system up in their office and asked the customer to provide information that could be programmed into the system during preliminary staging, including details as specific as the numbers, speed dials, and transfers the agency needed to be programmed into the system.

"We were able to get it all programmed and pre-installed before we took the equipment to the customer's site and connected it," says Dotson. "This made the entire process go very easily."

"The installation was seamless," adds Hager.

Testing for NetTN compatibility

A very cooperative process took place between state officials and contractors and GeoConex to verify that the system would connect to Tennessee's Next-Gen i3 network. "The state's technicians came in, hooked it up to the NetTN, and confirmed that the system was running properly and meeting the state's requirements," says Hager. "It passed all of their tests."

When asked whether this oversight felt like an intrusion, Hager says it was quite the opposite. "We have state requirements to address, and the more checks and balances I have to make sure the solution meets them, the better."

Easy and adaptable

Although the new system was taking the agency from a button-based system to a PC-based user interface, dispatchers adopted it quickly and with minimal training. Hager says that the more their dispatchers use the system, the more they're able to provide input on how its configurations can be adjusted to improve their workflow.

"At least once a week, a dispatcher hands me a suggestion that can improve how we use the system," says Hager. "The system is so easy and adaptable, we can make changes on the fly. In our business, that's critical."

Dotson concurs: "It's very easy for us to make any changes that the center can't make themselves. And because we can handle many of these changes remotely, we can also usually make them very quickly. It saves everyone time and money."

'An excellent reference site'

Claiborne County's transition to their new MAX Call-Taking system was completed in March of 2014, and shortly thereafter, the solution was connected to the NetTN network. Thus far, the system is performing just as everyone had hoped it would. But Hager is not resting on his laurels.

"With next-generation technology coming at us full force, you can never really settle in," he says. "But I love the system, and I can't stress enough how responsive Zetron and GeoConex have been helping us implement it."

"Based on the success of this project," adds Dotson, "Claiborne County will be an excellent reference site for other agencies that are looking to upgrade. In fact, we already have several more MAX Call-Taking installations on the horizon." ■



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