Solutions Story

Unified Crisis Response: Across the School, Across the District

Hybrid Telecenter U® Delivers Advanced Technology
While Saving District Nearly $1 Million

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Mike Mertens, Director of Facilites, Parkway School District

Parkway delivers both daily and emergency communications using a hybrid solution

Faced with the need for a unified, advanced crisis response solution across 30 existing and newly built schools, the large Parkway School District in St. Louis found the vendor selection relatively straightforward.

Parkway was strategically modernizing all of their systems, and Rauland's Telecenter U® was an important platform that updated critical communications and emergency response on a district-wide basis, according to Mike Mertens, Director of Facilities at Parkway.

"We liked the scheduling and PA solutions Telecenter U offered, but being able to reuse our existing infrastructure is what drove our decision," said Mertens. "At the same time, Telecenter U delivered a one-touch centralized emergency response solution for us."

A HYBRID APPROACH

The District knew they needed to replace existing and aging paging/intercom systems and wanted a clean sweep replacement that would integrate well with other planned upgrades.

The hybrid Telecenter U solution allowed Parkway to replace all of its old, cumbersome intercom head-ends, while re-using 100

percent of the speakers and call switches, and 100 percent of the cabling, noted James Swingle, Manager of Parkway's Planning and Construction Services. The result delivered modernized capabilities for both emergency and daily use, at enormous savings to the district — almost $1 million.

COST-EFFECTIVE SECURITY UPGRADES

"The Telecenter U technology allowed us to conserve considerable capital compared to other alternatives, and no other system provided the comprehensive strategic communications district-wide," said Swingle. "Telecenter U's IP-based capabilities also got our schools out in front of regulations that are expected down the road."

"Previously running on older analog systems, we're now putting things over the network, with upgraded security systems that go between buildings easily," he added.

He said the new Telecenter U emergency response/scheduling/PA technology, for example, was phased in with the door lock, camera, and fire systems for centralized security.

Swingle explained that newer buildings in the District now have full IP capabilities.

Existing schools are being transitioned to full IP, he said.

NEW 1-TOUCH EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Any school office, Swingle explained, can now press the appropriate button on their Telecenter U Console to execute pre-programmed emergency communications (e.g., Lockdown, Weather, Evacuate), and Telecenter U will:

- Play standard, pre-recorded emergency announcement over PA
- Email/text security office, officers and other key personnel
- Place a phone call to Parkway Security Center and play a pre-recorded message informing of facility and emergency

Telecenter U also delivers District-wide communications, he continued, to any classroom from any school or district office. The technology also allows communications from any classroom to the school office with normal and emergency escalations to other consoles, phones and even the Security Center.

STRAIGHTFORWARD, CENTRALIZED

With the older system, Swingle said, updating scheduling and events at the schools was a time-consuming process. "Electricians had to physically visit each and every school, one at a time, to change the bell schedules. Now, we can handle all of that centrally, with just a point and click over the web, for every school," Swingle explained. "School offices can even handle it themselves."

"Telecenter U's calendar-style scheduling is very easy and intuitive to use," Mertens added. "The web-based, 'point-click-drag' style calendar administration for bells and scheduled events was immediately understood and used by our school office personnel."

"Using the entire communications system is just as easy," Mertens added. "Training has been very straight-forward for anyone who uses a computer. The only difficulty office personnel had was in replacing behavior that had been in place for 20 years!"

FUTURE ENHANCEMENTS

Looking ahead, Mertens said the District will be further enhancing its capabilities, including Telecenter lockdown using the classroom confirmation capability so the Parkway Security Center can quickly identify problem locations. Call buttons for that already exist in most or all classrooms, he said.

Additional emergency triggers, Swingle said, can be added for emergency procedure initiation from many sources including:

- Emergency buttons (e.g., in school offices for personnel not near console)
- Phone buttons (i.e., on office or classroom phones to initiate emergency procedures)
- Smartphone App

Telecenter U®

The Telecenter U solution selected at Parkway School District manages Communications, Events/ Scheduling, and Threat Management Automation school-by-school and across the district.

Elements of the solution used at Parkway School District include:

- Administrative Console
- Web-based User Interface
- Hybrid Wiring with 24-Port Gateways
- Microphone Input Module
- Zone Page Modules
- SIP Integration
- Call Switches

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About Parkway School District

Parkway School District is a public school district serving eight municipalities in western St. Louis County, Missouri. The district operates four comprehensive high schools, one alternative high school, five middle schools, and eighteen elementary schools, along with two preschools.

About Rauland

Rauland is a respected leader in the design and delivery of critical communications, workflow and life-safety solutions worldwide. Rauland is a division of AMETEK Inc., a leading global manufacturer of electronic instruments and electromechanical devices with manufacturing, sales and service locations across the United States and other countries throughout the world.

About Telecenter U®

Telecenter U® delivers district-wide critical communications management, from the District to the campus to the classroom. Using Telecenter, a school system can integrate and manage communications involving emergencies, scheduling and events, and everyday use. Telecenter is a complete network-based solution that administrators can access anytime, from anywhere, using a phone or web browser.

About Primary Systems

In 1976, Primary Systems was founded in St. Louis, MO as a uniquely qualified company to provide for the design, installation and maintenance of Life Safety systems. For over 40 years, Primary Systems has provided customized and comprehensive solutions within the greater St. Louis and Southern Illinois Healthcare and K-12 Education markets.

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