

Baseline

IT Saving Lives

By Wylie Wong | Posted 2010-06-28

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For the first time, emergency dispatchers who receive 911 calls from Coppin State University will know the exact location of the callers—a technological advance that speeds response times and helps save lives.

In the past, 911 calls from the Baltimore-based college gave emergency dispatchers only the main campus address. If students or staffers dialing 911 were too incapacitated or stressed to give their exact location, emergency responders would arrive on campus, and with the help of the campus public safety department, hunt for the caller's location—not an easy task when the campus has 16 buildings.

In January, the university deployed eTelemetry's Locate911 appliance on its Avaya VoIP system. This technology splits the campus into several hundred zones, so when someone calls 911, emergency dispatchers are notified which zone the caller is in, says Ahmed El-Haggan, Coppin State's CIO and vice president for information technology. The campus' public safety department is also notified through text and e-mail messages, so they can respond at the same time.

"Before, it was like trying to find a needle in a haystack," El-Haggan says. "Now, we know which building, which floor and the area of the floor they are calling from."