

Ashe County Government



New VoIP phone system keeps pace with users in multiple buildings

The new Ashe County Law Enforcement Center was one motivating factor for upgrading the phone system used by the many offices of Ashe County Government. After consulting with SkyLine/SkyBest, they chose to replace their Nortel phone system with a Mitel 3300 ICP VoIP PBX. This system is used in the Ashe County Law Enforcement Center, Ashe County Courthouse and Administration Building and Ashe County Agricultural Extension Office.

Brent Keith, SkyLine/SkyBest Business Sales Executive, notes, "The Mitel 3300 ICP VoIP PBX is a big leap forward in technology for Ashe County Government. It's an integrated system that uses one network to converge both voice and data. Since everything rides over the data network, it requires less cabling infrastructure."

And because the software-based machines are very upgradable, they have a longer life. This phone system also shows presence, meaning a status indicator conveys the ability and willingness of a potential communication partner to communicate. Convenient features include conference calling, video calls and document collaboration, as well as the use of wireless headsets."

These wireless headsets enable employees to move freely about the three buildings. Ashe County Sheriff James Williams, appreciates this and other features of the new system. "It works well to have wireless headsets and be able to walk through the different buildings while still on phone calls. I also like managing voice mail on the computer and connecting to other Ashe County staff members by dialing just four digits," says Williams.



Ann Clark and Dan McMillan with Ashe County Government

Harless is impressed with the personal attention from the SkyLine/SkyBest staff. "I could go on and on about how patient they have been with us. The SkyLine folks have checked and double-checked to make sure we were all 'up and running' when the phone system was installed. Since then, they have been quick to respond to our questions about phone use and programming features. How wonderful to work with local people that you can actually find when you need them. On a scale of 1-10, SkyLine gets a 20!"



Ashe County Court House

Ashe County Manager Dan McMillan, agrees that the new phone system is beneficial. He explains, "It's a wonderful system and I can count on it to work. Granted, I'm not the most technical person but our IT people and our users have great things to say about the system's many features and how they help streamline communications. I know this system will continue to benefit us in the future and allow us to work more efficiently."

Efficiency was also cited by Lisa Harless, Administrative Assistant at Social Services, when asked about her experience with the Mitel 3300 ICP VoIP PBX. Says Harless, "It's great for receptionists to see if staff are on the phone rather than having to walk back to their office and 'hunt' for them. It's also great to have wireless headsets and be able to take your phone with you if you are going to another office. I can now check voicemails on my computer, which is incredible, and the speed dial keys and direct page options are superb. Best of all, the system is really user friendly."

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- James Williams, Ashe County Sheriff

Redundancy was another important issue for Ashe County, especially since phone communications are literally a life-and-death matter for 911 Emergency Management. SkyLine/SkyBest made sure the system provided super redundancy; hardware is able to shift, and if one controller is down, calls go through the other controller. Each controller also has double hard drives and double power supplies.

"I can't tell you how much I appreciate SkyLine," says Williams. "They worked day and night to get us in here; they practically did back flips. You don't get that kind of service everywhere. They're a top-notch organization to work with." McMillan agrees, adding, "SkyLine has been a partner with Ashe County on many issues; this new phone system is just one of many examples. They make sure we have the latest and most advanced technology available."



SkyLine Technicians Tony Holt, Craig Poe and Gary Brown