

Lower Colorado River Authority

XMU+ DELIVERS MESSAGING TO RADIO STATIONS/PHONE LINES



Overview:

The Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) is using an Interalia XMU+ system to provide messaging in Central Texas. The XMU+ broadcasts weather and emergency information, dam/lake conditions, flood warnings and environmental conditions to two radio station frequencies and a phone line.

Problems:

There were two problems the LCRA faced:

1. Limited memory in the old ZETRON digital repeater was negatively impacting their broadcast.
2. Messages were requiring more information and reducing content to fit the memory limits of the old repeater was not acceptable.

Solution:

With a failing repeater, Saul Silva, the Engineering Supervisor for LCRA's Telecommunications Group went looking for a better solution and found Interalia's XMU+ which had more capability than the existing system and could work with the company's existing Nortel PBX. As part of the plan, the LCRA added more transmitters to their broadcast network and then installed the XMU+. Saul says "The XMU+ pretty much worked right out of the box with only a little bit of help from our technical support."

Benefits:

The XMU+ provides the LCRA with many benefits. First, the old repeater only had 1 minute of memory so messages had to be very short, now the XMU+ can store a large number of messages and each message can be longer. Second, the repeater did not allow messages to be downloaded in advance, but the XMU+ does, so messages can be downloaded anytime and held by the XMU+ until the exact date and time they should be played. Third, the repeater couldn't broadcast to specific zones so everyone had to hear the same message. With the XMU+ the LCRA can play one message to one radio station and an entirely different message to the other station, and even send messages to individuals at their plants. Fourth, since the XMU+ broadcasts more frequently than the old repeater, people can get updated information quickly which is very important in emergency situations. Fifth, the XMU+ plays a clear message without interruptions - the old repeater often stalled during broadcasts so the messages used to be hard to understand. Finally, messages are very easy to update with the XMU+ and they can be uploaded remotely over the network or recorded from any location over the phone. The old repeater could only be updated directly at the unit in Austin, so it was a hassle to make changes and in an emergency situation it could take too long to get the right staff involved.

The Colorado River Authority:

The Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) has 2200 employees and operates hydro electric dams, power plants, one coal plant, two gas plants, wind power stations and electrical transmission facilities. For over 60 years it has played a variety of roles in Central Texas: delivering electricity, managing the water supply and environment of the river basin, developing water and wastewater utilities, providing public recreation areas, and supporting community and economic development.

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