

Picture Perfect University Parking: Handhelds with Integrated Cameras

After experiencing a 27-percent student population growth from 2000-2005, Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green has soared to 18,000 students. However, growth doesn't always mean more room, at least not when it comes to parking.

The university knew it needed to become more efficient in using its 8,000 parking spaces for students, faculty, staff and visitors. To do so, it formed a dedicated parking and transportation department and hired a director, Jennifer Tougas.

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Before the department was formed, parking was handled by the police, transit was handled by the facilities department and operational decisions were made by a committee. Additionally, citations were paper-based, making data entry long and tedious.

"It was a very reactive system before. The university had grown so quickly. The committee realized they needed to hire a professional parking staff to develop a program and start planning for the future, not just meet whenever something needed to be addressed," said Tougas.

WKU implemented T2 Flex™, T2 Systems' comprehensive parking management system for a more efficient operation. Several TDS Recon 200 handheld ticketwriters were implemented as part of the solution, providing field officers with the ability to deliver electronic citations rather than paper citations. Plus, the handhelds' built-in camera functionality allows officers to take a snapshot of the violation, greatly increasing the credibility of citations and the staff.

"Taking a picture using the handhelds saves a lot of time and gives us a leg to stand on when it comes to disputing citations," said Tougas. "As part of the handhelds, image capture now requires zero data entry and file management time. Each photograph is integrated into the database and directly



connected to the appropriate citation. The appeals board can see exactly why there was a citation."

Moving away from paper citations has also helped increase collections. Before T2 Flex, WKU was a month and a half behind on processing citations. Now, with the digital parking management system, information is uploaded off the handhelds at the end of the day. The prompt upload of information allows WKU to place accounts on hold until parking citations are paid.

"There was no way of invoicing or billing people before. Once a year they would receive a notice for a new permit, but that was it. Now, we're incredibly efficient and can easily keep track of our customers without all the paper work."

Since T2 Systems hosts WKU's Web site, the university will also be able to offer online services, such as purchasing permits or paying citations, to students, faculty and staff. And, one of the biggest advantages of the new system is the ability to generate ad-hoc reports, which are especially useful when working with university administration.

"These reports allow us to extract just the information we need when we need it," added Tougas. "We always receive questions such as 'How much revenue is generated by Freshman permits?' and depending on what the data tells us, we can tailor our activities."

For more information on T2 Systems, please call 800-434-1502 or visit www.T2systems.com.