Our Customers Speak for Our Solutions
An OAISYS Case Study

East Tennessee
Knoxville, Tennessee

AAA East Tennessee is the east Tennesse regional club for the national leader in member roadside assistance. As with other AAA clubs, they also offer insurance and travel booking services.

The club has four locations, and member's calls are segmented between its roadside assistance, insurance and travel agency duties. When they initially began looking at a call recording solution several years ago, their need was twofold.

"We needed a better way to train our staff," said Director of Automotive Services and Information Technology Craig Horsley. "It really came down to customer service and quality assurance as the primary need. The secondary need was complaint resolution. We needed documentation and verification of what was said."

Working in association with OAISYS Reseller Southeastern Telecom (SeTel), AAA East Tennessee initially chose Tracer six years ago, in part because of its tight integration with the communications system they were using at the time. Recently the club upgraded their system to an NEC SV8300 connected via an OAI integration and also upgraded their Tracer software to the latest version.

Originally, two factors drove the club to choose Tracer. The first was cost. "Initially, we had this expectation that the (cost of the call recording) system itself was going to be outrageous," Horsley said, "and we looked at some that were. (Tracer) we found to be right in the ballpark of what we were willing to spend." The second item was Tracer's integration with the phone system they had at the time, which gave them additional functionality other solutions did not.

Tracer's ability to easily adapt to a multitude of communications environments was an added benefit. One of AAA East

Tennessee's locations is approximately 150 miles from their headquarters and located in another area code. Originally, a second Tracer system was deployed to record that location's calls as well. A challenge arose when trying to figure out how to centrally collect the data from both Tracer systems, since they were recording off two separate PBXs.

OAISYS support staff was able to configure the Tracer system at the remote location in what is known as "replicator mode," so it was able to acquire its data stream from the primary Tracer, rather than the PBX. That way the remote Tracer obtained its information from the SMDR (Station Messaging Detail Record) input to the main Tracer and was able to allocate calls via those records.

With their recent upgrade of both telephone systems and the Tracer software, the call data is accessed via two instances of Tracer, and information is seamlessly located via the web-based administration module.

"Of course SeTel has done a tremendous job of making sure they act and behave as they should," Horsley said. "I needed their assistance on the configuration of that just to make sure we weren't duplicating [activity] as far as recording."

Looking back over their history with Tracer and how it has improved their operations, Horsley said, "When we first went live with it, we were ranked in the top 20 on roadside assistance for our call receivers. For the last two years we've been ranked number one on call receiving for all of AAA. It was quite a big push for us, and a large part of that was the call recording ability and the tools it gave us to go back and work with our staff to make them better."

With the evaluation capabilities available in Tracer, Horsley has

realized even greater benefits. "We have a formal call review process with scoring and evaluations. Now we're able to go through and score them using the evaluation portion of it.

"We probably do three times that in informal evaluations. When we get a survey back in and there's a negative comment or a bad score, we browse through that phone call, and it lets us quickly get a snapshot of what happened. So in addition to the formal process, we go back and listen to a lot of calls in general, just to get an idea of what's transpired when they have a member on the phone. That really wasn't the intent, but with the ease of being able to pull this information out, we really lean on it much heavier than we ever thought we would."

Almost immediately, Tracer has proven to be especially valuable for the club in terms of dispute resolution. Horsley cited a specific example in which the Tracer solution helped the club to avoid a potentially costly and reputation damaging outcome.

"We'd had the recording system in place maybe a month or two, and we had a travel customer, a mother, who came into our office. She was very upset that we had booked her family on the wrong cruise.

"Her daughter was graduating college. This was going to be their last family vacation, and they had an itinerary in mind. When they got all the cruise documents they realized we'd booked them on the wrong one. She was visibly upset; so we got her upstairs and into our director's office and I went and found the phone call.

"As it turned out, her husband called in to book the cruise and he gave us the wrong information. We booked exactly what he told us to. If we would have been wrong, that would have been a multi-thousand dollar mistake, and you hate to have something like that come down to, 'He said/she said.' This made it very clear from listening to the phone call that the husband just got it wrong, and the wife realized that."

"It also gave us the opportunity to step in and work with the cruise line. We got them upgraded and added some other things that they didn't have to pay for, some other amenities we were able to bring to the cruise package that softened the blow a little bit. Tracer gave us the opportunity to resolve the situation and hopefully make a travel customer for life because when she walked out she was very happy with what we were able to do for her, even though we didn't have to."

Tracer's ability to quickly locate and easily play back calls has also saved the club from numerous instances of attempted insurance fraud. "We get this routinely," Horsley said, "where people call in and say, 'Hey, I need to delete this vehicle off my policy.' A customer calls in, drops a car from their coverage and, sure enough, they still own the vehicle, they wreck it and a couple months later they call in for a claim saying, 'Oh, no, I didn't drop that vehicle. You did that by mistake.' We are able to go back, pull the call back and resolve that as well.

"It lets us know if we made a mistake and it gives us the opportunity to step up and make it right. If the customer was wrong at that point, then it helps us to see what we can do to salvage the situation."
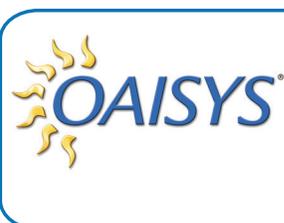
Another added benefit AAA East Tennessee has realized is the solution's integrated coaching functionality, which has proven very helpful for training new hires. "We're really looking at new folks. Eventually, you've got to push them out of the nest, and they've got to be on their own. We didn't really have the tools in place, we felt, to adequately support them while they were on the phone (when they start out on their own). The coaching client lets us stay connected to them real time and we can jump in and coach them through some key points that they need to mention. That's another feature we're going to take tremendous advantage of."

From both a user and a technical side, Horsley admires Tracer's ease of use and administration. "I'm both a user and the system administrator," he said, "and it's got to be one of the easiest systems I've ever had to use, administer and deploy."

In addition to performing an upgrade of its Tracer software and phone system, AAA East Tennessee also recently replaced a great deal of legacy software. "I got to experience with both hands not just configuring and installing, but also the user aspect and, compared to everything else we've done, the Tracer system has been the easiest to learn to use, to set up, to configure, to train people on. It's been very simple, and to me, from an IT perspective, that takes a load off."

While the club has not formally tracked any cost savings realized from the improved training, evaluation and dispute resolution Tracer has brought to their operations, Horsley is quick to state the solution has paid for itself several times over. "Without a doubt, it is indisputable what it's done for us."

Horsley cannot say enough good things about Tracer. "This has been a great product for us. When we look back over the years, we've spent money on a lot of things, but this is one that has paid for itself a million times over. Our CEO is the first one to say this has been well worth every nickel we've put into it."