

RGS Communications

Press Release

MHC Staff Put It All on the Line to Solve Phone Emergency

From CSJ April 18, 2003

<http://www.mtholyoke.edu/offices/bng/wirestory.shtml>

You can't see it, touch it, or hear it, but you have probably used it every day you have been on campus. It is MHC's largest telephone cable, an 1,100-foot bundle of wires (1,800 pairs of them) that carries telephone service from Central Services Complex to twenty-seven buildings on campus. When, in October, the cable began failing, people across campus started experiencing static-filled voice mail messages, misdirected phone calls, and no dial tone. By February, 180 pairs of wires on the cable were failing every week (about eighty phones), and it became clear that the cable would have to be replaced. Staff from Facilities Management and Card Services tackled the complex, time-consuming project during MHC's spring break.



Photo: Lee Bouse

'It was no spring break for us,' says Utilities Specialist Russell Boudreau, who worked long days on the project alongside Systems Manager Douglas Vanderpoel, and Electricians Supervisor Kenneth McKenzie and his team. 'But we feel really good about what we accomplished,' Boudreau adds, noting that by replacing the single large cable with multiple, smaller ones, MHC has minimized the chance of future campus wide phone failure.

Mount Holyoke's team began installation March 13. The first step, called 'pulling,' involved attaching a rope to one end of a new 3,000-pound cable, then pulling that rope (by hand or machine power) into one of the manholes that leads to MHC's web of electrical lines and communication conduits. Underground, **with help from RGS Communications of Palmer, Massachusetts, MHC staff transferred the College's phone lines onto each new cable through a mating process called 'splicing.'** Above ground, Douglas Vanderpoel arranged for temporary, fiber-based phone systems, ensuring that calls could come in and out of campus while the cable was shut down for the transfer.

By March 26, new cables had been installed to support 1,200 lines in Abbey Hall, Buckland Hall, North and South Rockefeller Halls, Laboratory Theatre, Gorse Child Study Center, Skinner Hall, Clapp Hall, Reese Psychology and Education

Building, the Art Building, Talcott Arboretum, Mary Lyon Hall, and five houses on Faculty and College Streets. Service to the final 600 lines affected in Williston Library, Dwight Hall, Shattuck Hall, Pearsons Hall, Pearsons Annex, the President's house, Newhall Center, Merrill House, Williston Observatory, and the Francis Perkins House was fully restored April 7.