

# Case Study



## Integrated Fire and Life Safety Systems Quietly Monitor an Entire Campus

### Background

As one of the largest college campuses in the world, Berry College in Rome, GA, boasts 27,000 rolling acres that include fields, forests, lakes, and mountains, providing scenic beauty in a protected natural setting. There are 47 primary buildings on campus, including 15 classroom facilities and 10 residence halls. Berry College embraces a bold and distinctive approach to meeting the challenge of preparing students for life by combining relevant academics with character-enhancing and career-building experiences.



### Challenge

While Berry College students focus on academics, social activities, and their beautiful surroundings, the college is dedicated to continually improving campus fire safety behind the scenes. Each building on campus is unique and requires a customized fire safety plan that considers all aspects of a building and its occupants. Therefore it is important that all design, construction, repair, and maintenance of fire, intrusion, and life safety systems meet or exceed college expectations. Under the direction of Steve W. Hatfield, Berry College's NICET certified, low-voltage technician, fire safety is a perpetual priority. "In fact, campus fire safety has been an ongoing initiative," says Hatfield. "As the college kept expanding, fire and life safety was getting more important."

### Solution

With new safety and security technologies emerging at a rapid pace, the campus safety department has an almost limitless selection to utilize in their quest for safety. When it came time to change things out, however, there was only one clear choice: Fire-Lite by Honeywell. "We are systematically retrofitting every fire and life safety system, and we found that Fire-Lite panels are very good for retrofitting," explains Hatfield. "When retrofitting the older panels and systems over in each of the buildings, we make sure the wiring is still good and compatible with the Fire-Lite panel, which it is, then design the corresponding system, and then change it out. We design, install, maintain, and test all the equipment. Everything works great."

For example, Thomas Berry Hall – a residence hall on campus – recently had its fire and life safety system retrofitted. Thomas Berry Hall is a four-story, wheelchair-accessible building with about 36 bed rooms, a study, a lounge and public kitchen, and a laundry room. They needed a system that would accommodate multiple scenarios, such as if a room smoke detector goes off, it doesn't evacuate the whole building. Hatfield designed a system that



*Berry College, Mount Berry, Georgia*

uses sounder bases to produce a local alarm, but if there was an actual fire, the students could then pull the lever of a pull box to alarm the whole building. “The Fire-Lite panels worked very well in that capacity,” he says. “It can activate a local alarm or provide total evacuation with human interaction.”

As such, the whole system was replaced from smoke detectors, horn strobes, panel, power supplies, and even new wiring. A voice evacuation system was also included to accommodate the elevator recall. “It’s an all-encompassing system based on a Fire-Lite panel with System Sensor horn strobes,” Hatfield clarifies. “It was really easy change over, too. It just took some time to design. That what makes a Honeywell system so good: it’s very easy to work with, easy to design, and easy to install.”

There are many different considerations when retrofitting fire and life safety systems in other buildings on campus. The Richards Memorial Gymnasium, which was recently renovated to include a new 200-sq.ft. weight room and satellite training room built on the site of the old indoor pool. The work also included locker rooms; office space for intercollegiate football, lacrosse, and tennis; a refurbished floor in the gymnasium; a new floor in the dance lab; and refurbished

offices for the Berry Outdoor Leadership Development (BOLD) program. The old life and life safety system was entirely replaced with a new Fire-Lite system with voice evacuation.

“Contrary to a dorm situation, if one alarm goes off in the gymnasium, we want total evacuation of the building,” explains Hatfield. The voice evacuation system helps to notify occupants of an emergency situation. “There are many times where the students and staff play loud music while they lift weights or work out. We designed the system to override any areas where they plug-in the music to go through a relay. If there was a fire alarm, it would shut off the electricity to the receptor so that the voice message could be heard,” shares Hatfield. “Our fire alarm takes priority over anything that’s going on at the time.”

## Results

Other types of buildings throughout the Berry College campus – large residence halls, large classrooms and small log cabins – are all retrofitted with Fire-Lite systems in some capacity. “And it works the same way,” Hatfield says. “The Fire-Lite panel is used in the same exact manner. So no matter if the job is really small or if it’s really big, Fire-Lite covers all areas to make sure that life safety is taken care of.”

Everything is monitored from the central station, located at the college welcoming station in the main gate house. Interestingly, the only way to get on campus is through the front gate and welcome center: there is someone monitoring the central station at all times. “We do our own proprietary monitoring,” he says. “Everything that comes in through our central station, whether it is a security or fire alarm, even mass notification, we do it all. “Fire-Lite is also user-friendly for our campus police who go and answer the calls. If everything is fine they reset the panel. It’s very easy for them to do so.”

