Lack of blue lights surprises, disturbs visitors

By Tim Green
Staff Writer

In comparison to The College of New Jersey (TCNJ) and Princeton University, Rider's blue-light system lags far behind.

TCNJ has 10 emergency phones available to students while Princeton has 108 blue-lights blanketing its campus.

At TCNJ, the phones were set up in locations that were “not in close proxim-ity” to the buildings, said Ray Necci, professional services specialist for Campus Police.

But Leighanne Carucci, a senior at TCNJ, feels that even 10 blue-light sta-tions do not secure the campus.

“I still don’t think there are enough here on our campus,” Carucci said.

“There are so many places that are not lit. I can only think of one phone that I know of.”

Carucci was shocked, however, at Rider’s low number.

“There should be more phones at Rider,” she said. “I’ve been there and it is such a big campus to have so few. It is so dark at Rider at nighttime, there should be more than two blue lights on the campus.”

Another TCNJ student admitted feeling insecure when she visits Rider.

“I’ve been to Rider to use the library and I don’t think it’s very safe at night,” said senior Jessica Mavuro. “I always park in the huge lot in front of the Student Center and it’s a pretty big area for there not to be more phones.”

Princeton’s blue-light system is differ-ent from those at Rider and TCNJ.

In comparison to The College of New Jersey, Princeton University’s blue-light system was installed in the dorms pretty late at night.

“We wanted to put one in the dorms as a substitute and share the gifts we have together and share the gifts we have,” said Pierce. “It is bringing people together. It was more of a service. I decided to help the students feel concerned. We later added the one near Memorial.”

Weaver said Security wants to hear students’ opinions on this issue, but before anything can be done it must be practical.

“It may not be financially feasible,” she said.

Many students felt more phones are needed in potentially hazardous places or ones students frequent most often.

“I think that we should have more,” said junior Lisa Rangnow. “We need them out by the ‘O’ lot. I take dance lessons at night until 11 o’clock and I always have to walk back from the park-ing lot to the dorms pretty late at night. It can be scary.”

Sophomore C.J. Passarella felt the resident quad is a necessary spot for an additional phone. He also wants one placed on the opposite side of the lake, closer to the Greek houses.

The University examined that possibil-ity, but no phone was ever added.

“We did look into pricing,” Pierce said. “At the time we did not have the funding.”

According to price quotes pro-vided by Ed Wisniewski of Oliver Communications Group Inc., installa-tion of a blue-light station closer to the student center would cost $7,130 just for labor and materials.

The reason for such a high cost is the job would require approximately 500 feet of cable to run from the Poyda Residence Hall communication room to the prospective area.

Quotes were obtained to assess the cost of adding a phone in the “O” Lot, which many students felt was needed. If the line of sight were not put down leading from the communication room of the Student Center, it would cost $32,355. Another option could be to run cable from the existing blue light phones in the parking lot over to the “O” Lot. The cost of this would be $14,762.

These prices do not include the cost of the phone itself, which, depending on the model, can range anywhere from $1,795 to $3,805, according to Code Blue, the vendor of the emergency phones.

Even though price quotes have been obtained, the students say that more phones will be installed.

“I just get the quote and send it to whoever asked for it,” said Pierce. “It is up to administration to decide whether or not the phone should go in.”

Dean of Students Anthony Campbell said there is no “pile of mon-ey” set aside for blue-light phones, but there is a tradition of correcting safety issues.

Campbell said there have been improvements in the number of stand-ard call boxes at the entrances of many dorm buildings. He said these boxes, too, could be used to alert Security.

But according to Student Government Association (SGA) President Wayne Saldanha, this is not the case.

“The call boxes are not a substitute for emergency phones,” Saldanha said. “The students need one-button access to security. Some of the call boxes don’t even work.”

Many of the call boxes have a 2x2 inch label with the emergency exten-sion, 5321, posted on them.

“The stickers are too small to see,” said sophomore Bri-je Faughnan. “They would be even harder to notice during an emergency.”

Also, if a person were to dial 911 from a call box, it would not work. In order to reach the police from a call box, a person would have to dial 9 + 911.

“Sure, a lot of people know to dial 9 to reach an outside line when they use their phones in their rooms,” Faughnan said. “But who would remember to dial when trying to call the police from a call box?”

Campbell said he would be willing to work toward a solution.

“We would like to get a group together and take a look at it,” he said. “I’d love to meet students with some ideas and map it out.”

Weaver noted the possibility of using cellular phones to call Security.

“Maybe if you’re in your car and it breaks down a cell phone can be use-ful,” Saldanha said. “But on campus our students need something more than just a cell phone.”

Saldanha said SGA would take a closer look at the issue and try to increase the number of blue lights on campus.

He felt that students had to voice their opinions to the administration about wanting more phones.

“If the students feel concerned about it, then it is an issue,” Saldanha said. “If the students give it a push then they [the administration] would con-sider adding more phones.”

Westminster Choir College (WCCC) has the same problem with its blue-light system. There is currently only one emergency phone on the campus, located outside of the Westminster Conservatory.

One student compared the campus to another school he had attended, which had quite a few of them.

“At my undergraduate school you could see them in a straight line, one to the other,” said Shane McDonald, a graduate student at WCCC. “You would need to put one in the resident quad and another in the parking lots. So we need at least two or three more.”

Feast from page 1

sale from Monday, Nov. 18 through Thursday, Nov. 21 at the Student Center Ticket booth. One can also call the ticket booth at (609)-896-5303, between the hours of 11:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.

“The Rider community has a lot of students who are less fortunate. One could say we are trying to do something about the need of the rider community,” said Debra Fink. 

“The rider community has a lot of people to give thanks for. We should gather together and share the gifts we have and help our community,” said Dean Anthony Campbell.

The Thanksgiving dinner, which will consist of turkey, mashed potatoes, stuffing, corn, rolls and cranberry sauce will be served by the basketball team.

lemon, coffee, tea and hot tea will also be served along with apple and pumpkin pie.

“We have a committee formulated to coordinate it annually. We will have three speakers this year who will speak about being thankful. It’s important for the university to give thanks,” said Lawrence Johnson, associate dean of students.

Rider’s Thanksgiving dinner is now in its fifth year in this particular format. Previously, the event was held in the Gill Chapel and was more of a service than a get-together.

“There was no meal, it was more about bringing people together. It was more like a service. I decided to help the chaplains about five years ago because that attitude was not good. I suggested bringing a meal,” said Cassie Lacovelli, assistant dean of campus life.

“Now it is more highly attended. It’s a bigger rider community thing for it to feel like having a dinner together at home and recreate a family type din-ner. We want it to bring comfort and capture the spirit of Thanksgiving.”

Despite the feedback, the Rider faculty and student body, the dinner also serves the purpose of helping the needy.

“Every residence hall and floor is collecting canned goods and food for this event. To get in each student must bring canned goods to make a basket.”

said Father Bruno Ugiano, campus minister and chairperson of “A Reason to Celebrate.” “After the celebration we make these baskets and distribute them to different groups who are less fortunate during the holiday season. We’ve gone higher than 70 baskets last year and hope to continue like that.”

“it is critical that we get together and be thankful for what we have,” he added. “That is the purpose of this din-ner each year; be thankful and bring people together.”