



# NEWS RELEASE

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## FOOD BANK OF CENTRAL & EASTERN NC UPGRADES COMMUNICATION SYSTEM

### *Cisco Grant Makes New Phone System Possible*

**RALEIGH-** The mission of the Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina is to harness and supply resources so that no one goes hungry in central and eastern North Carolina. The non-profit organization delivers food to **34 North Carolina counties each day** – that's **one third of the entire state**. There are more than **400,000 individuals** at risk of hunger in this section of the state. The service area covers almost **19,000 square miles** – **from the Triangle, to the rural coast, to the Sandhills and Coastal Carolina**. With **logistical challenges** like this, strong communication is critical. While **hunger statistics continue to rise**, the connection between the Food Bank's five branches and those at risk must be consistent and efficient. A **\$92,000 grant from Cisco**, part of the Community and Philanthropy Product Grant Program, allowed the organization to transition from an outdated, obsolete PBX phone system to a new IPT Phone System **before the busy holiday season started for 2006**. It is extremely important that the Food Bank be in a **position to respond quickly and effectively** and a new phone system is a major step in addressing those concerns.

Food Bank staff worked from late summer to the middle of fall to get the new system up and running. The project started in May with initialization of the grant application process. The grant was awarded in late June. Installation began in early September with each of the five branches (listed below) transitioning onto the new system separately so that service interruptions were minimized.

A volunteer team from Cisco was closely involved with the staff to oversee the transition and installation. Team members were: Paul Van Raay, Lonnie Harris, Maurice Spencer, Michael Whitley, Ernie Bose, Gbemi Munis, Eric Attala and Wayne White. Other Cisco staff members involved were: **Ed Carney, Joe Novak, Joe Freddoso, Ruth McCullers Lee, and Paul Zavattieri.**

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“Merging our voice and data services onto a single network makes for a much more robust and scalable infrastructure,” said **Charlie Hale, Director of Information Technology** for the Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina. “Add to that the capabilities of Cisco’s Call Manager and Unity Software and you begin to realize the Food Bank’s network and recently installed IP phone system is truly cutting edge.”

The Food Bank will be able to **greatly improve the productivity of the staff** and volunteers by automating the receptionist and call routing functions, and at the same time **enable the ability of donors and customers to always be able to reach a live person**. Centralized management of the phone system at the Raleigh branch allows for more efficient moves, additions and changes to staff phones.

Some additional improvements are:

- Improved handling of incoming calls
- Most incoming calls serviced by an Auto Attendant
- Single staff directory for entire organization
- One standard voicemail system serving all sites
- Voicemail and broadcast messages can be sent to staff at all branches
- Staff at every branch can forward messages to employees at any other branch

With the Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina being **one of the first responders** in the event of a natural disaster **where every second counts**, as well as a **daily hunger relief organization**, the new phone system is **crucial to getting consistent information to the public and to all branches in the least amount of time**.

To be a part of **daily** hunger relief in the 34 counties served by the Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina, go to [www.foodbankcenc.org](http://www.foodbankcenc.org) for more information, call the main branch at (919) 875-0707.

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**Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina  
3808 Tarheel Drive  
Raleigh, NC 27609  
919.875.0707**

**Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina at Durham  
708 Gilbert Street  
Durham, NC 27701  
919.956.2513**

**Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina at Greenville  
497 West 9<sup>th</sup> Street  
Greenville, NC 27834  
252-752-4996**

**Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina at Sandhills  
195 Sandy Avenue  
Southern Pines, NC 28387  
910-692-5959**

**Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina at Wilmington  
1314 Marsteller Street  
Wilmington, NC 28401  
910-251-1465**

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**About the Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina**

The Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina is a nonprofit organization that provides food for people at risk of hunger in 34 counties in central and eastern North Carolina. The Food Bank serves a network of more than 890 partner agencies offering soup kitchens, food pantries, shelters, and programs for children and adults. In fiscal year 2005-2006, the Food Bank distributed more than 31.4 million pounds of food and non-food essentials through these agencies. Sadly, hunger remains a serious problem in central and eastern North Carolina. In these counties, more than 400,000 struggle each day to provide enough food for their families. [www.foodbankcenc.org](http://www.foodbankcenc.org).