

NEC BUSINESS NETWORK SOLUTIONS UNITES GROWING CITY WITH CISCO IP TELEPHONY



Surprise, Arizona City Hall

Back in the 1930s, a real estate developer and state legislator subdivided a rural parcel of Arizona land into low-cost home sites for the area’s agricultural workers. They named the town “Surprise,” after the developer’s Nebraska hometown.

Back then, Surprise was little more than a few small houses and a gas station. Today, signs posted at Surprise’s borders tell a very different story: “Population Increasing Daily” they read—so much so that Surprise is frequently named the fastest-growing city in Arizona, and at times has held the title fastest-growing city in the United States.

This rapidly-growing community generated a massive increase in services required—both by the residents of Surprise as well as by the local government. The Surprise, Arizona IT staff chose NEC Business Network Solutions to help meet its growing needs. NEC Business Network Solutions is a Cisco® Gold Partner with numerous Cisco specializations including IP Telephony Services, IP Telephony Revised, VPN/Security, Wireless/LAN, ATP IPCC and AppleTalk Transaction Protocol (ATP), IP Contact Center (IPCC) and MetroOptical Transport. The company assessed current technology at the City and deployed an IP Communications solution with Cisco CallManager, Cisco Unity™ software, and Cisco IP phones.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Technology Vertical

IP Telephony/Government

Partner/Business Model

NEC Business Network Solutions is a Cisco Certified Gold Channel Partner, and holds Cisco specializations in IP Telephony technology and services, as well as VPN/Security, to name just a few. The company has 14 years of voice experience, more than four years of IP telephony experience, and more than 3,000 certifications in voice, data, and video technologies. NEC Business Network Solutions has developed a vertical focus in education, healthcare, Fortune 1000 businesses as well as state and local governments.

Customer

The City of Surprise is one of the most rapidly growing cities in the state of Arizona. As a result of its growth, the City soon found itself with a PBX phone system it had outgrown and a burgeoning population that necessitated additional services at the state government level. The City also had multiple “campuses” that needed to be unified smoothly and reliably for callers.

Challenge

The new CIO for the City of Surprise was concerned about the structure of the existing network, and was unsure whether the core system was capable of supporting an upgrade to a converged network. Additionally, the IP telephony

system would have to be phased in because mission-critical areas such as the police department could not function with downtime

Return on Investment

The City of Surprise saves \$50,000 per year just on moves, adds, and changes. The centralized network management has eliminated the need to hire additional IT staff as the City grows, and the state-of-the-art network and phone system has enabled the City to attract valuable new business such as professional baseball teams for spring training camp.

PARTNER SUCCESS STORY

NEC BUSINESS NETWORK SOLUTIONS

CITY SEEKS TO REPLACE PBX WITH CONVERGED IP COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM

“I attribute the success that NEC Business Network Solutions has had in the government market to our consistent service delivery model and the methodology we use to replicate our highly available and reliable IP telephony network solutions,” says Doug Manring, account manager for NEC Business Network Solutions. “Previous installations, such as for the City of Peoria, provided us with the valuable knowledge required to flawlessly deploy IP telephony technology.”

When it came to updating its communications network, the City of Surprise started at the basics, examining its needs.

“We couldn’t add more phones to our PBX system because we had outgrown it,” says Randy Jackson, chief information officer for the City of Surprise. “The City had to decide whether to replace it with another PBX system, or put in a converged network. City officials looked carefully at both solutions and decided on a converged network. We really wanted to future-proof our technology, and when we looked at the marketplace in voice and data products, we saw that eventually all voice products will be IP products.” The City received multiple bids from standard PBX companies, Centrex companies, and companies that could deploy a converged voice and data network solution. In the end, strong references were the deciding factor.

“Every city and private industry reference for NEC Business Network Solutions had glowing results,” says Jackson.



Fans enjoy watching spring training at the Surprise, Arizona baseball stadium.

“A converged network made total sense for the City of Surprise,” says Manring. “The City had built a third ‘campus,’ the Surprise Town Center, to attract additional business and provide more services. And voice and data needed to travel smoothly between the new campus and the City Hall complex.” Also, according to Manring, the City already had the infrastructure in place to support IP, which made choosing a converged network a sound financial decision.

Because the City already had the core network infrastructure in place prior to Jackson’s acceptance of the CIO position, he was pleased that a key component of the work done by NEC Network Business Solutions was a complete network evaluation.

“NEC Business Network Solutions did a thorough evaluation of the City’s infrastructure and produced a comprehensive report that gave us all the information we needed to know,” says Jackson. “The core system was already in place to add on to the network, and they outlined any issues with this core data infrastructure that needed to be upgraded prior to implementing CallManager and Unity.”

“A lot of companies don’t make the investment in the testing gear needed to do a thorough baseline audit and network analysis,” says Manring. “We’ve even taken it a step further and take a base reading and actually put voice calls out over the data network to see what’s already there and what is needed. This kind of testing proactively prevents surprises and unforeseen challenges.” Jackson reported that the rollout went according to plan. The only problem was with the telecom provider, but Manring and the NEC Business Network Solutions team had foreseen this and made it part of the plan.

IF YOU DEPLOY IT, THEY WILL COME

The new Surprise Town Center includes a new public library, aquatic center and a baseball stadium. Many professional baseball teams go to Arizona for their spring training, and Surprise wanted to attract that kind of business. The Texas Rangers and the Kansas City Royals both selected Surprise and its state-of-the-art stadium and clubhouses for their spring training facilities. And — as a decisively positive testimonial to Jackson’s group and to NEC Business Network Solutions— both of these Major League Baseball teams opted to let the City of Surprise install their phones on the City’s IP network, rather than bringing in their own phone system as most teams do.

“WE SAVE US \$50,000 A YEAR ALONE IN MOVES, ADDS, AND CHANGES THAT ARE NOT GROWTH-RELATED, PLUS THE IT STAFF THAT USED TO HANDLE THOSE TASKS ARE NOW SPENDING THEIR TIME MORE PRODUCTIVELY.”

“The fact that these teams are tying into our system is very unique,” says Jackson. “It makes the city a spring training partner, rather than just leasing out the facilities.”

The NEC Business Network Solutions team planned to make the phone system fully operational in increments, because mission critical areas such as the police department could not have downtime.

“Working as a team was critical,” notes Manring. “With the help of Randy’s staff, we quickly acclimated to the environment and the teams worked well together in coming up with a plan to phase in the phone system and avoid downtime.

The City of Surprise is already realizing the benefits of its new converged network.

“We save US \$50,000 a year alone in moves, adds, and changes that are not growth-related, plus the IT staff that used to handle those tasks are now spending their time more productively,” says Jackson. “It’s a good solid network that provides ease of communications among the Surprise campuses.” The centralized network management has eliminated the need to add IT staff as the City of Surprise grows. Jackson reports that the directory feature in the IP phones increases everybody’s productivity while the multi-site networking decreases the amount of time spent on dialing intra-campus extensions.

Bringing communications to a new fire station used to involve installing a stand-alone phone system because of the expense of adding a T1 line for voice.

“Now, we don’t need a phone system at the stations,” says Jackson. “We can install the phones as part of a CallManager cluster and the station has voice and data connectivity without having to set up a separate stand-alone phone system.”



A SURPRISE-FILLED FUTURE

Jackson says that perhaps the biggest benefit to come out of this project is that it has provided the City of Surprise with a core IP telephony system that won't become obsolete.

“With our rapidly growing population and employee base, we needed something expandable that would accommodate new technology,” said Jackson. “With Cisco and the expertise of NEC Network Business Solutions, we have exactly that.”

For his part, Manring said that Cisco has done a great job bringing the technology and new applications to market in a short period of time. “NEC Network Business Solutions made great efforts to embrace IP telephony and converged network technology, which has made us very proactive in promoting the product to our customers.”

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