



Looking Out for the Good Life in California's Cornucopia

About the City of Santa Rosa

Santa Rosa is a vibrant city about 55 miles north of San Francisco that boasts small-town charm and big-city advantages. The picturesque community of 150,000 is close to vineyards, farms, redwood forests, rivers, lakes and the Pacific Ocean. Santa Rosa's thriving downtown attracts locals and visitors eager to explore specialty stores, buy fresh local produce at year-round farmers markets and dine at world-famous restaurants. Tourism is a vital part of a diverse economic base that includes agriculture, high tech, bio-medical, education and environmental industries.

Situation

The City Council mandated that Santa Rosa be "on the leading edge for technology," to better support an excellent quality of life for residents and visitors. Since the late 1990s the city has used video surveillance to enhance security in a number of public places. Santa Rosa wanted to expand this surveillance with wireless cameras in parks and other places where it wasn't practical to install wired units. They also wanted to offer free wireless Internet (Wi-Fi) access at public sites throughout the community to support municipal safety forces and make it easier for the public to get information and services. The plan required a robust network that was secure, scalable and easy to maintain.

Solution

AT&T created a network that supports expanded video surveillance, Wi-Fi services, Voice over IP and other solutions in collaboration with Cisco and other telecommunications equipment specialists. The city has introduced dozens of new video surveillance cameras and the network transmits the videos to city dispatchers. Free wireless access makes it possible to connect with the Internet in city buildings, parks and other locations, improving the productivity of mobile city workers. Santa Rosa uses its powerful network to attract new businesses and visitors and improve life for its residents.

A Large City with a Small-Town Feel

Santa Rosa promises a life of plenty in what residents like to call "California's Cornucopia." Food and wine, golf and other sports, museums and vineyard tours all contribute to the city's appeal. California urban planners recently recognized Santa Rosa's downtowns as one of the top five in the state because of an engaging mix of offices, homes, excellent shopping, inviting public spaces and a flavor of the wine country.

City of Santa Rosa

- **Business Needs**

Improve public safety, enhance productivity of city workers and provide improved services to residents

- **Networking Solution**

Wireless mesh network uses private line, fiber and wireless connectivity to support video surveillance and wireless applications

- **Business Value**

New applications support municipal workers' need for quick access to information; improved quality of life for Santa Rosa citizens

- **Industry**

Municipal government

- **Size**

150,000 residents



"It's an interesting community, a large city with a small-town feel," said Eric McHenry, chief technology officer for the City of Santa Rosa. "We're nestled in the middle of wine country, with Napa to the east, the Pacific Coast to the west and the redwoods to the north. Most residents enjoy the outdoors and are committed to living a sustainable lifestyle."

Although the city did not have a serious crime problem, a decade ago it installed video surveillance cameras in response to the concerns of some residents who didn't feel completely safe at the city's transit mall. These cameras help people feel safer and give emergency dispatchers valuable information that they could share with police, firefighters and other first responders. The surveillance was so helpful that over the years the city has installed cameras in parking garages, parks and other city locations.

Most recently, AT&T helped Santa Rosa deploy wireless surveillance units in open spaces where traditional wired cameras were difficult if not impossible to install. A robust mesh network using private line, fiber and wireless connectivity transmits the IP videos to city dispatchers.

Safety, Convenience and Productivity

The city's network supports over 80 surveillance cameras throughout the city, effectively multiplying the impact of Santa Rosa police presence. Police, firefighters and emergency medical technicians now have on-demand access to any of the cameras. The solution increases response time and protects safety forces by letting police officers and dispatchers see what's going on at the scene before they respond to emergency calls.

As it expands, the wireless municipal network will make laptop computers almost as indispensable to Santa Rosa firefighters as their helmets and hoses. Fire crews will be able to get turn-by-turn directions on their way to the site of a fire or other emergency, and even access building plans so they know the interior layout before they enter a burning structure. "City council has been very supportive in deploying the video surveillance network that helps our public safety forces and contributes to residents' and businesses' feeling safe," McHenry said.

The network also is intended to let city workers use handheld devices to conduct business. Building inspectors will be able to meet contractors at a site and issue permits on the spot. Public works employees will be able to keep better track of the maintenance of city assets such as the 50,000 trees that line city streets. "Once operational, workers will be able to enter a maintenance schedule, report damage, and open or close a work order directly from the field," McHenry said.

Wireless connectivity lets other city workers remain productive no matter where their work takes them. "All city buildings have connectivity in all the conference rooms and most of the work areas," he said. Electronic document and content management software let staff access the files they need to continue working. "Today people use laptops to continue to work when they have meetings in a conference room or somewhere else in the building. That's a big productivity improvement for a lot of people."

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– Eric McHenry, Chief Technology Officer for the City of Santa Rosa

Taking Advantage of Connections at City Hall

Santa Rosa has been named a national leader in its use of technology to inform and engage citizens in governmental affairs. As recently as a decade ago, however, it was difficult to conduct any kind of business with the city without showing up at City Hall. "City council wanted to make it easier for our residents and businesses to work with the city," McHenry said. "For my team that means employing technology that makes that possible, and helps us keep pace with growing information needs."

The city expanded its website to facilitate stronger connections with the community. It's now possible to get detailed traffic reports, apply for a job, find out about concerts and exhibitions, check the police blotter, report a crime, pay a parking ticket, locate office space and complete dozens more tasks easily via the city website, www.srcity.org.

The site also lets developers and contractors get zoning information, apply for permits and track the progress of applications online. "Now developers don't have to come down to the city and stand in line," he said. The website lets them investigate building and fire codes, request inspections and check the progress of construction projects.

Strategic Thinking and Strong Relationships

Santa Rosa's infrastructure can support popular initiatives like the tee cameras and potentially lifesaving technology like the wireless computers used by police officers and firefighters. The 30-member Santa Rosa IT group works to be "very knowledgeable about the applications that we need to deliver from the network," McHenry said, "and what sort of interconnections, security standards, software and hardware we have to have in place to keep the network secured from both outside and in."

As recently as five or six years ago the city was more interested in finding the lowest price for what it wanted to purchase without looking ahead to what it may need in the future and understanding whether the current purchase would support future ones. "We weren't looking strategically ahead two or three years," he said. "We need to determine which companies can allow us to put something in now, grow it, leverage it and not have to recreate point-to-point solutions across the network."

Strategic vendors have helped the city introduce a number of high-tech perks for its citizens. "AT&T was very helpful to us in deploying our free Wi-Fi network as well as our video surveillance network and other aspects of our data communications technology solutions," he said. AT&T introduced Cisco to help build the city's wireless mesh network, IDSolutions to connect the surveillance cameras and NetApp to assist

with the city's burgeoning data storage needs. "AT&T brought a number of different vendors to the table to fill out the solution space," McHenry said. "That was really important for us, so we didn't have to cobble all this together ourselves."

Building on its Strengths

Santa Rosa plans to expand on its relationships with some of the larger enterprises that already deliver services to the city. "We really value the fact that we can get a broad range of solutions that are typically connected to some of the larger vendors like AT&T," he said. "What that does for us is that every time that I have a new problem, I don't have to go research which new vendor to work with or what new technology. I can just go to my existing vendor, so I get results faster and for a good price."

With continued support from these and other providers, Santa Rosa plans to upgrade the wireless surveillance cameras on its buses by adding mobile access routers to send surveillance data over the city

network. McHenry said the city also will introduce more online services, and make even more information available to workers in the field "so they can make better decisions and work faster to correct problems in the neighborhoods."

Additionally, Santa Rosa is developing ways to use its already-strong GIS department to share more geographic information about the city with residents, and has begun to tie work orders into a citizen relationship management program, similar to customer relationship management programs used by many corporations. The program will connect resident requests' requests or complaints with work orders and keep the residents apprised of progress on the situation.

Santa Rosa City Council's mandate to be "on the leading edge" with technology has gone a long way toward making life easier and more pleasant for residents and visitors in California's Cornucopia.

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