

POISED FOR A TRANSFORMATIVE FUTURE



NORTEL



Case Study

A comprehensive Nortel voice, data and optical solution has helped the **City of Martinsville** transition from a traditional manufacturing-based culture to competition in the global economy.

City of Martinsville, Virginia
Refusing to be left behind in an increasingly hyperconnected world, the city of Martinsville is now geared for a productive future.

Challenge: Having witnessed an exodus of manufacturing jobs, the city of Martinsville set out to “rethink, rebuild and retrain” — to transition to a new technology-based economy. In support of this objective, the city’s IT department was tasked to develop a new communications strategy and to then design and build a network that would bolster the city’s educational and cultural initiatives and attract new business. City administrators recognized the infrastructure for such a network must be ultra-resilient, open, agile and future-ready.

Solution: The City of Martinsville has deployed a Nortel solution that includes a SONET wide area network self-healing ring architecture, the Ethernet Routing Switch 8600, Layer 3 Ethernet Routing Switch 5520s and 5530s for high-density Gigabit desktop connectivity, Ethernet Switch 470s with Power over Ethernet for IP devices, the Business Policy Switch 2000 and the Communication Server 1000M. The Communication Server 1000M is a carrier-grade platform supporting both traditional voice and Voice over IP (VoIP) communications.



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— Michael Scaffidi, telecommunications director, City of Martinsville

Benefits: This Nortel voice and data solution is not only saving the city money, but is allowing it to resell services as a municipal local exchange carrier and to provide the services it requires to compete in the global economy. The city was previously spending approximately \$350,000 a year in local telecom charges; that’s now been reduced to \$65,000 a year. The city is now providing voice and data services to its governmental agencies, schools, institutions of higher education, local businesses and attracting new businesses to the city.

Martinsville, Virginia is a city in motion. Off the beaten path, but only a short drive from several major metropolitan centers and Research Triangle Park, Martinsville has what the city’s director of telecommunications Michael Scaffidi calls that “hometown, nestled-in-the-woods feel,” but with its sights clearly focused on a dynamic future — and with a firm strategy for prosperity.

About six years ago, the future wasn’t looking nearly so bright for the city of Martinsville. In very short order, a number of textile and furniture companies had pulled out of town, and with them went some 15,000 jobs.

“We had to think about what we were going to do about that. We had to rethink everything,” says Scaffidi, “and that’s where communications came in.

“We sat down and we said, “To compete globally, we have to build a new communications infrastructure.”

With the assistance of Nortel, Embarq, the Mid-Atlantic Broadband Commission and NTELOS, the city now has that infrastructure in place — an agile, future-proof voice, data and broadband solution.

“This system is extremely robust,” Scaffidi says, “and the range of services we can provide on it is extraordinary.”

The plan

Scaffidi knew that making a strong case for a new communications network would require proving that it would be a solid investment.

“I knew that we needed a pretty quick investment payback, and that the way to realize that was to place a PBX system in our city government,” Scaffidi says. “We were averaging around \$350,000 a year in local telecom charges. I felt that if we brought our own PBX system in, our payback would be well within a three-year range — which is the way it’s worked out.

“At the outset, it wasn’t an easy sell,” Scaffidi says. “But we had to show the outside world that this small community could compete, globally, and that we had the communications infrastructure to do so. So the city council agreed to pursue this opportunity.”

A firm plan was required: “We had to know what we could accomplish in one year, and where we wanted to be in five years.”

And a solid partnership was critical: “I knew who the technology leader was, and that, hands down, was Nortel. I contacted the local Nortel representative, and we started to talk.”

The payoff

The solution the city of Martinsville has put in place is paying off in a number of important regards.

Educational opportunities: The city now provides telephony and Internet services to all Martinsville public schools, which, Scaffidi says, has been a tremendous cost saver.

Patrick Henry Community College has a point-to-point circuit from its uptown campus to a downtown artisan center and the public schools have access to both Patrick Henry and the New College Institute, a local four-year college.

“That’s created a pretty good mesh with the schools,” Scaffidi says. “They can not only communicate with each other but with the higher-educational facilities. That was a pretty substantial undertaking, and it’s gone great.”

An economic boost: Scaffidi says the city has been attracting a lot of call centers into its industrial parks, which has required restructuring the interiors of buildings from previous manufacturing set-ups.

“We’re retooling on the fly,” Scaffidi says. “We need to adjust to evolving demands.”

The upshot is that Martinsville has transitioned to a more services-based economy, and, says Scaffidi, “Our people are looking to government to help make this happen. I think that taking this initiative has made Martinsville unique — has put us ahead of the curve.”

The city is now providing telephony and/or Internet services to a number of new clients, including Hooker Field, the local baseball stadium; the American Distribution Warehouse; the Commonwealth Center, which houses several businesses; and the Blue Ridge Regional Library.

“This system has certainly paid off, and people are well pleased,” says Scaffidi. “We don’t have to market anything; people come to us.”

Telemedicine: Scaffidi has been engaged in conversations with Memorial Hospital of Martinsville about creating a network that all medical facilities would be tied into over a virtual LAN.

“They don’t presently have that capability, and we think it would be of tremendous benefit.”

An ambitious future: “That’s the exciting part,” Scaffidi says of what this solution has positioned the city to provide going forward. “This network really brings a lot to the table.” Wireless throughout the Uptown business area is currently being implemented and consideration is being given to expanding the capability of services offered into the residential areas. And the city’s infrastructure is well positioned to provide a triple-play service in the future.

“Once again, this is something we’re talking with Nortel about — phone, Internet and television. We just want to make sure that this community has what it needs, and I think we’re doing a pretty good job of it.”

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The partnership

Scaffidi says that a number of factors were critical to his decision to go with Nortel.

“First off, when I originally contacted them — and I did contact other vendors as well, because with an endeavor of this magnitude I obviously wanted to be certain I was partnering with the right vendor — I was immediately impressed with the knowledge level of the Nortel staff, from the sales team right down the line.”

He says that he explained what he wanted to do, and that the Nortel team offered several solutions.

“They then sat down with me to discuss the options — how they’d play out in the short and long term and what I could expect with paybacks — and they gave me references of people they’d worked with in the past on similar projects. They assisted me in tailoring a solution that fit my objectives.”

Another strong selling point was the ease of management of this solution.

“On the data side, I was impressed that I could very easily manage things. I was able to understand how to make changes in the network. And now if I’m out of town, I can explain to one of my guys how to make changes and deal with issues.”

In sum, says Scaffidi, “Nortel has been just a great asset to this community. They’ve helped us realize the vision we had for our future.

“They understood my needs. I had a vision that was way out there. They told me what the options were to make those things happen, that it could all be done, and they were right. I believe we’ve met the city’s needs for years to come.”

“What we’ve done here has provided a strong economic boost to this community,” Scaffidi concludes.

His advice to other city administrators who might be considering a similar, ambitious undertaking:

“Don’t just build for what your immediate needs are. Look ahead. Prepare for the future. And prepare with someone who shares your vision.”

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