WE

Hospitality company implements SD-WAN to boost bandwidth and IT resiliency

Resort Lifestyle Communities (RLC) owns and operates independent senior living communities for retirees aged 55 and over. The growing company needed a reliable, high-bandwidth solution to support their employees and residents at 61 communities nationwide.

At a glance

RLC
RESORT LIFESTYLE COMMUNITIES®

Industry

Hospitality

Customer

61 locations across the United States

~2000 employees

Challenges

Outdated legacy T1 lines

Insufficient bandwidth

Multiple access vendors

Overburdened IT team

Solutions

SD-WAN

Ethernet & broadband access

Dynamic IP

WE Connect portal

Results

Reliable and resilient connectivity

Eased burden on lean IT staff

Significant cost savings

Enhanced guest experience

The need for more bandwidth

Resort Lifestyle Communities (RLC) needed more bandwidth to support the services they provide to their residents, including various streaming platforms, cable TV, on-site theaters, WiFi and guest Internet access. Their existing T1 data and voice connections were no longer adequate.

RLC implemented Windstream Enterprise's SD-WAN (Software-Defined Wide Area Network) and counted on Windstream Enterprise to provide a primary Ethernet connection and a secondary internet connection for resiliency and increased bandwidth. Windstream Enterprise deployed network access in an active/active configuration to maximize uptime, and the bandwidth of both connections is pooled and always available.

The high-performance Windstream Enterprise network delivers an enhanced guest experience when residents are streaming content, watching TV, attending the theater and accessing WiFi.

SD-WAN algorithms ensure that the most latency-sensitive apps are prioritized to flow over the best-performing connection. As a result, the corporate traffic from headquarters to local communities, other office locations and remote or hybrid workers has experienced significantly decreased latency.

Making IT's job easier

RLC has grown rapidly over the past few years, and managing multiple access vendors became complex and cumbersome. Windstream Enterprise now provides and manages all access vendors for RLC. The primary Ethernet line is typically a proprietary Windstream Enterprise connection, and the second line is a diverse third-party connection. Both are completely managed by Windstream Enterprise

"Windstream Enterprise has been an excellent partner as they understand our business and are highly responsive to our needs. The Windstream Enterprise support team adds tremendous value to our business, and we consider them an extension of our IT team."

Ryan Bichler
Chief Information Officer of Resort Lifestyle Communities

Windstream Enterprise provides proactive ticketing and initiates resolution on any network or access issues. Offloading these troubleshooting tasks to Windstream Enterprise has been of great value to RLC. The company is now able to focus on driving business innovations rather than spending time troubleshooting and putting out fires.

In addition, RLC has found tremendous value in the support from the Windstream Enterprise team, most notably the SD-WAN technical service manager, whom RLC considers an extension of their in-house IT personnel.

RLC executives also value the dedicated project manager assigned to them. They appreciate how all Windstream Enterprise support staff are highly responsive and demonstrate how deeply they understand RLC's business needs by offering value-added recommendations.

Out with an outdated IT infrastructure

RLC had expensive and aging legacy T1 lines for voice calling. The company removed the T1s and replaced them with Windstream Enterprise Dynamic IP using Session Initiation Protocol (SIP) trunks to transport voice services over the SD-WAN network.

Windstream Enterprise helped RLC achieve significant cost savings by removing the T1s, along with the added benefit of not having to deal with multiple local-access and voice vendors. The voice service is now more reliable and has increased resiliency by traversing over SD-WAN compared to outdated T1 lines.

RLC uses the WE Connect portal daily and considers it to be a great tool. The most important aspect is the co-management capabilities that allow RLC to tweak parameters like application prioritization in real-time.

The IT team uses the SD-WAN management portal in WE Connect to track ticketing and to measure performance metrics, such as quality of experience, and the accounting team uses it for invoicing purposes.

"The SD-WAN product was launched when we started opening communities in as many markets as possible; demand for bandwidth has grown and is still increasing," says Ryan Bichler, Chief Information Officer of RLC and Cameron General Contractors.

Managed cloud connectivity, communications and security—guaranteed.

"With Windstream Enterprise managing our network, we've been able to focus our IT team on driving innovation. The Windstream Enterprise solution has also enabled us to deliver a superior customer experience for our guests."

Ryan Bichler
Chief Information Officer of Resort Lifestyle Communities

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