

Secure Wireless Network Solution and Network Upgrade for Chews Landing Fire Department in a cost-sensitive manner.

Case Study: Chews Landing Fire Department

The Context

Historically, non-profit organizations have lagged behind their corporate counterparts in adopting information technology (IT). Usually lacking the budgets to invest in the most recent technology systems and software tools, these organizations have been forced to “make do” with patchwork networks and donated/outdated equipment.

The Client

Based in Blackwood, NJ, the Chews Landing Fire Department is responsible for fire suppression, EMS and fire protection and prevention for approximately 25,000 residents in Gloucester Township Fire District #2. The fire district has over 260 businesses, two elementary schools, one middle school and over 2,700 students. It is estimated to have over \$617,000,000 in ratables. A staff of six and over 40 volunteers are members of the fire department.

The Problem

In late 2006, frustration with the fire company’s IT network had reached a critical point. Manual processes were in place to update software in the companies seven Toughbooks (heavy-duty laptops used in the fire trucks and other vehicles). Computers were beginning to slow to a point of instability, file sharing on the company “server” (a Windows 98 workstation) was unstructured and not secure. An unreliable, outdated ATI backup system was being used for data backup

Data Troop Rescues

Data Troop’s first task was to perform a comprehensive assessment of the company’s IT assets, identifying the issues that needed immediate attention and to formulate a plan to streamline and eliminate the manual processes on a limited budget.

Since then, key Data Troop contributions have included:

- A secure wireless network was installed to cover the entire building, including the four bay engine room and parking lot. The wireless solution was a vital component for this project to allow the laptops/toughbooks Internet and network/server access for software updates.
- Bluetooth technology was used to allow the toughbooks the ability to securely print from inside the trucks and other vehicles to their portable HP DeskJet 460WBT printers while on or off-site.
- Upgrading the current server to a Dell PowerEdge SC430 with MS Small Business Server including RAID 1 hard drive configuration for redundancy and an external drive to perform daily backups. Configuring WSUS to distribute the necessary Microsoft security patches. CLFD now have the ability to host their own email and web services on-site.
- Workstation operating system upgrades from Microsoft XP Home to Microsoft XP Professional Edition. Workstations maintenance was also performed in the form of memory upgrades, defragmentation of hard drives, device driver updates and spy-ware removal.

The Results

Data Troop has delivered dramatic results for the Chews Landing Fire Department. Workstations and back-end equipment have been upgraded and standardized, workflows have been streamlined, and the wireless and portable solutions have made services available to the staff which were previously unattainable.