

City of Allen, TX Success Story

It's "GAME ON!" for Esports in Allen, TX



Challenge

- Years of legacy telecom services based on analog trunks
- High susceptibility to outages and dropped calls during routing
- Unreliable circuits, problematic to essential and emergency services

Solution

- 1 Gig Fiber Dedicated Internet Access (DIA), public Wi-Fi, and Hosted Voice
- Multiple point-to-point connections across facilities for diversity & resiliency
- 10 Gig extra-bandwidth, high-availability line to ensure low latency at esports events

Results

- Wider, more reliable Wi-Fi at pools, parks, and other public spaces
- Fast and dependable VPN access for hybrid and remote city staff
- Low-to-no outages; responsive service for all other routine support

It's No Game to Run a City

1,000 full-time employees spread across City Hall and 20+ facilities. An IT team tasked to support the work of a diverse array of municipal services. Everything from library checkout systems to 911 dispatch to mobile first responders. Yes, it's safe to say that broadband capacity and network availability are vital to the city of Allen, TX. This is why finding a dependable connectivity and

communications provider was fundamental for enabling Allen's numerous mission-critical operations. Throw in an immersive global esports gaming event at the city's primary entertainment complex for good measure, and that old adage for the Lone Star State certainly rings true: Everything is bigger in Texas. Especially the stakes for ensuring that Allen, TX remains online day and night.

The Challenge: Keeping Access On, Open, and Available All the Time

"70% of a city's IT budget, on average, is making sure that its people can connect and communicate, whether working in the office or out in the field," says Eric Matthews, CIO for the City of Allen, recalling the city's network challenges. "So, fast and reliable connectivity, for us, was not just a need, but a must. We place a premium on resiliency and high-availability along our communication pathways." In general, network resiliency and diversity for public safety and quality of life were foremost mandates across the municipality. But that wasn't the only challenge. The power and dependability of the 10 Gig bandwidth,

low-to-no latency line that Astound proposed and brought to the city's Credit Union of Texas (CUTX) Event Center was another paramount municipal imperative. This infrastructure would allow Allen to proudly host its high-profile annual collegiate esports gaming tournament. "This competition is hugely important to the city," stresses Matthews. "And for an event of this complexity, sophistication, and global stage, there's just no room for outages. Zero. You can't let these e-athletes or their many fans down."

The Solution: Connecting City Residents to Essential City Services

Today, a mix of enhanced communications services from Astound keeps the city's activities buzzing. A 1 Gig fiber-driven Dedicated Internet Access (DIA) solution, public Wi-Fi, and Hosted Voice are just some of the Astound-powered platforms available for both the municipality and residents to leverage. For example, the library is a key nexus where the city and its people connect, hosting various cloud-based services that extend easy access and enhanced experiences. "Library members can log on, check out books, and read them digitally on this platform," says Matthews, "as well as finding and consuming other media and materials. And we have to keep a real-

time, always-on connection available for whenever they wish to do so—on any given day or night."

Adds Matthews: "Astound allows Allen to maintain a super-high uptime—with upwards of five 9's reliability (99.999%)—for these and many other services. We don't even talk about downtime at team meetings. It never comes up, because outages don't happen." With this level of commitment to reliable connectivity, it's no surprise that Allen, TX, has been recognized as a "Top Ten Digital City" by Government Technology magazine for seven of the last eight years.

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— Eric Matthews, CIO, City of Allen, TX

The Result: "Can I call the head of any other provider? No. But at Astound, I wouldn't be surprised if I could."

Such consistency in reliability across so many municipal services is one of the main reasons why the city of Allen has remained a customer of Astound for nearly a decade-and-a-half. "As standard procedure, we're prompted by our procurement department to look into other alternatives," notes Matthews. "I then point to our sheet of Astound contacts and respond, 'Can I call the head of any other provider if we have an outage?' No. But at

Astound, I wouldn't be surprised if I could. Everyone there is that responsive." Matthews then closes with: "This is all part of the price-to-value computation for how our city council spends taxpayer dollars—and decides whether to stay with a vendor or not." After years of competing head-to-head on these fronts, Astound is thrilled to remain the winning player for the city of Allen, TX.

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