

City of Celina, TX, Success Story

It's Go-Go-Grow! —For Celina, TX



Challenge

- Insufficient broadband by limited incumbent provider
- Other carrier option had a reputation for outages in the area
- Unprecedented growth, demanding rapid change and flexible scaling

Solution

- 10 Gig Fiber Dedicated Internet Access (DIA); Dark Fiber redundant lines
- Expanded bandwidth to support key Internet Protocol (IP) TV network
- Greater public Wi-Fi coverage to support a doubling of population

Results

- Greater safety through real-time data integration between city and county police
- Expanded infrastructure to serve the municipality and explore smart city initiatives
- Peace of mind of shared colocation backup with neighboring Carrollton, TX

High-Speed Connectivity for the Nation's Fastest Growing City

Reliable, high-availability connectivity in network communications is absolutely critical for any municipality. This is certainly the case for Celina, TX, with its need to support essential public services, such as police, fire, EMS 911 dispatch, public works and safety, engineering, parks and recreation, and more. Even more pressing, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, Celina is presently the fastest-growing city in the country. Such positive growth brings

challenges. Constant excavation for construction projects has often resulted in severed lines. Essential service centers were frequently relocating to better serve ever-shifting concentrations of population. Even weather events have exacerbated already difficult day-to-day scaling issues. A fast-growing Celina needed a major change —and fast.

The Challenge: Anticipating, Scaling, and Managing Communications at Pace

From 2020 to 2023 alone, the population of the city of Celina grew 143%. And all trend lines indicate this upward momentum will continue through 2031. Managing growth on that order of magnitude would pose tremendous network infrastructure and service delivery challenges for any organization, let alone for a municipality responsible to support varied residents, businesses, institutions, and organizations. Working to ensure that Celina's IT infrastructure was prepared to accommodate such growth,

both Amy Alexander, Director of Information Technology, and Alden Gleason, Assistant Director of Information Technology were brought on to help meet the challenge.

Despite this unprecedented level of expansion, recalls Gleason, "Believe it or not, our communications provider at the time couldn't give us more than 1 Gig of speed. And the other carrier option in the area was known for regular and significant outages." So, in true fast-moving Celina fashion, the race to find a new provider was on.

The Solution: Adding Not Just Capacity, But a Flexible Partner Who Can Keep Up

City officials had heard of Astound Business Solutions from colleagues in a neighboring town, and they reached out to schedule a meeting. Astound and Celina's then brand-new IT team got to work immediately on an intense two-year upgrade of the city's communications systems. In short order, they saw that they made the right move. "One," says Gleason, "Astound was able to provide us the services that no one else was able to, and to this day, they've remained reliable. We're all really happy with what we've got."

"Under this amount of growth, we're constantly moving facilities, shifting operations, and evolving,"

Gleason details, "and Astound is always right there with us. As our relationship develops, we're seeing how beneficial their level of flexibility has been to us." This has also been the case with the city's own IP TV services, a tool for keeping departments and the public informed of city services and updates. High-speed dark fiber backup was also a critical upgrade for the city, providing diversity and redundancy by rerouting network traffic on-demand during unexpected growth-related incidents. "At times, we've seen a three-fold increase in network traffic, but all with no issues."

"Astound was able to provide us the services that no one else was able to."

— Alden Gleason, Assistant Director of IT, City of Celina, TX

The Result: "The speed at which Astound adapts has really made the difference."

The population of Celina was exploding during that 2020 to 2023 window, and that was precisely the time when the relationship with Astound began. Both Astound and the city had to hit the ground running in what IT Director, Amy Alexander, recalls "was a complete rip and replace. But the coordination between Celina and Astound, back then and now, continues to be great. Their project management staff has been excellent in getting services turned on and running." And she should know. She witnessed the transition from day one.

"Plus," Gleason is quick to add, "we never felt like we were gouged with pricing. Astound understood those needs, too."

In just a few years, the city has moved from originally needing no formal IT staff, to now overseeing a scope of work that demands a 50% increase of personnel for their team next fiscal year. It's a trajectory that reflects the city's own rapid growth and technological expansion—one that is projected by city planners to continue increasing throughout the next decade. *Go, Celina, grow!*

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