Jackson Rancheria Casino Resort

Family-owned Resort and RV Park Chooses Aerohive for Ease of Deployment and Network Management

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NETWORKS

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Jackson Rancheria Casino Resort is a family owned and operated casino in California that has been in operation since 1985. In addition to the casino, Jackson Rancheria also owns an RV park, a hotel, a gas station, as well as other businesses in the area. In fact, you almost should consider Jackson Rancheria a small town. On top of covering each of these locations, they also provide Wi-Fi for many of the tribal member's homes.

The Challenge

Prior to deploying Aerohive, Jackson Rancheria had a controller-based system. As their reliance on Wi-Fi continued to grow, they realized that having a controller at the center of their WLAN represented a significant risk in terms of having a single point of failure. Along with that, as 802.11 technology advanced, their controller-based system limited the access points they could deploy. Unlike Aerohive's cloud-managed technology, their controller became their bottleneck for moving forward with Wi-Fi technology. As throughput and capacity technology continued to march on, they weren't able to take advantage.

As they looked to deploy newer technology with the existing provider, they were shocked by the cost. After seeing quotes at a quarter of a million dollars, they knew they needed to look elsewhere for a modern solution.

One of the key requirements of a WLAN solution for Jackson Rancheria is reliability. With the deployment at the casino, unreliable Wi-Fi has a direct correlation to revenue. When guests are playing games at the casino and have an issue with a machine, they can press a button that signals a mobile worker to stop in to resolve. The mobile workers use iPod touches to receive notifications. The longer that guests cannot enjoy the gaming machines, the longer that Jackson Rancheria goes without a revenue opportunity. On top of the gaming machines, the various tables use Surface Pro's to manage the games and guest experience. These are also connected to the WLAN.

Simply put, whatever solution that Jackson Rancheria deployed was critical to their long-term business growth. With their previous system, they felt locked out of newer technology along with having consistent roaming issues with client devices.

The Solution

Jackson Rancheria started out with one demo access point from Aerohive. They were impressed with the architecture that Aerohive was based on. They weren't bound to a controller, but could still keep device management onsite.

After choosing Aerohive as their next enterprise wireless solution, Jackson Rancheria deployed Aerohive at their RV park. Leveraging Aerohive's outdoor AP1130s, they are able to provide guest access to their visitors. If you'd like to view a live shot of the RV park where Aerohive's APs are in action, you can do that on Weatherbug's website. They are using four outdoor APs to provide coverage for a 100 space RV park.

After a successful deployment in the RV park, they begin to deploy Aerohive AP230s in their Hotel and Bed and Breakfast locations. The Bed and Breakfast locations are over five hours away, so Aerohive's plug and play solution was timely for Dan Rehart and his staff. They relied on the ability to install onsite, and then monitor and troubleshoot remotely. All of their properties are connected via fiber optics, and they have a site to site VPN between them.

"The reliability of our Wi-Fi network has a direct correlation to revenue for the casino. **It simply has to work.**"

– Dan Rehart,
IT Manager,

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CASINO RESORT

The Solution *(Continued)*

As they continued with the Aerohive deployment, the hotel and its conference area became the latest beneficiary of Aerohive's cloud-managed Wi-Fi. Along with guest access for hotel visitors, the conference center offered access for onsite meetings from local businesses. They also have a concert venue for music attractions. In total, 22 Aerohive access points cover the hotel rooms, and an additional 6 cover the conference center and concert hall. They will frequently bring up new SSIDs for concert vendors and musical guests.

Dan Rehart loved the fact that as they continued with their rollout, they weren't hit with constant feature licensing fees. "Aerohive's key features were included with our initial purchase, and that has been a breath of fresh air for us".

To round out the initial deployment, the extremely difficult casino was next. There are 1700 slot machines and 1400 client devices on the network at any given time. As mentioned earlier, this location requires an extremely robust and reliable solution. Aerohive's technology was on showcase in this location. Leveraging Aerohive's software-defined radios to have a dual 5GHz solution, they were able to solve capacity planning while minimizing RF interference.

With assistance from Aerohive's support staff, they were able to fine-tune their radio profiles to be better optimized for their environment. The IT staff has the desire to learn more about Wi-Fi as a technology, and Aerohive has been helping them along the way. Along with helping them fine tune the network for the environment, they've also been teaching and training them on

why certain decisions are being made. While some networks might require 40 or 80MHz channels, Aerohive's support staff recommend a move to 20MHz channels in order to provide more capacity. This has freed up more channel width, but still provide more than enough throughput.

While guest access is provided, it's not mission critical. The mission critical aspect of the network is allowing the various gaming machines to communicate to support staff. When a machine is out of commission, they are losing revenue. Having a reliable and staff enterprise Wi-Fi solution is not only mission critical, but it's also essential for Jackson Rancheria's revenue.

The IT staff loved that with Aerohive's solution, their traffic is not funneled through a centralized controller and that all authentication happens locally on each access point. Because each access point has a firewall built in, the Wi-Fi can operate gaming tables, casino management software, and credit card transactions while keeping all of the data separate.

When Jackson Rancheria invests in new opportunities, the benefit of Aerohive's deployment model really shines with networks that are spread across entire states. The IT staff can manage them all without needing to be onsite at any single location. Adding new locations also doesn't add to the workload of any of the IT staff. Aerohive's cloud-managed Wi-Fi solved their problem of needing a modern wireless solution that was robust, could be deployed in stages (without concerns of scalability), easy to manage, but didn't break the budget.

Why Jackson Rancheria Selected Aerohive

Reliability

Network uptime diretly coorelates to revenue, so downtime is not an option

Cost Savings

Total solution was much less expensive than other solutions on the market

HiveManager™

Management System independent of a WLAN Controller delivers scalibilty