Riverbanks Zoo & Garden

Aerohive Provides Outdoor Wi-Fi to Riverbanks Zoo & Garden to Bolster Operations

"The wireless solution from Aerohive has not only provided robust indoor and outdoor Wi-Fi for Riverbanks Zoo & Garden, we have gained a true supportive partner. Aerohive works collaboratively with our IT team, as well as our local reseller, which is rare in this business. By having an open business culture, Aerohive puts our needs first and we are thrilled with how Aerohive has created greater efficiency across all avenues of our zoo initiatives."

— **Eric Davis**
System Administrator
Riverbanks Zoo & Garden

About Riverbanks Zoo & Garden

Located in Columbia, South Carolina, the Riverbanks Zoo & Garden ("Riverbanks") is home to more than 2,000 animals and is recognized as one of the nation's most beautiful and inspiring botanical gardens.

Riverbanks welcomes more than 1 million guests annually across its sprawling 170-acre campus and has earned a national reputation as one of America's best zoos. Riverbanks was founded in 1974 and is a premier event location for hosting educational programs and camps, as well as offering its facilities for local event use.

The Challenge

Riverbanks was compelled to seek out an enterprise wireless solution for several reasons, including the ability to equip the food and retail vendors to operate Point of Sale (POS) stations throughout the campus. In addition, many departments such as maintenance wander the park throughout the day and Wi-Fi would greatly increase efficiency in operations. And, like many public places where consumers expect wireless access, Riverbanks wanted to offer guest Wi-Fi to allow visitors to use their personal devices.

As a registered educational institution, Riverbanks offers many opportunities for education and learning, including classes on conservation and botany. For several years Riverbanks wanted to offer Wi-Fi in its classrooms, both for indoor and outdoor use as instructors explore the environment with iPads in the midst of coursework.

With its first priority on the care of its animals and conservation efforts, Riverbanks needed to find a solution that could meet a tight budget without large upfront costs.

The Solution

Riverbanks worked with reseller Data Network Solutions and evaluated Aerohive and Meraki before selecting a comprehensive wireless solution from Aerohive. Aerohive allowed Riverbanks to grow its network incrementally, without expensive upfront costs, and the zoo could easily expand and add on access points as the budget and resources allowed. A key differential for Aerohive was its accommodating business culture, which was vastly unlike other vendor experiences. Aerohive has incorporated customer feedback into product design, for example, adding external LEDs on the outdoor AP1130 when customers suggested the need.

Riverbanks deployed Aerohive AP121, AP230, AP170 and AP1130 access points, as well as a few AP330 access points in its event venues to meet high density and guest access. HiveManager Online allows Riverbanks to manage its network in the cloud and remotely monitor the network from any location, especially helpful for the IT team while they monitor nighttime events from home.

Having wireless access throughout the zoo and garden, including in outdoor spaces, has created many efficiencies across the organization. The maintenance department now uses Samsung devices to receive and update tickets while technicians roam the park, saving time and creating efficiency for the maintenance team.

Food and retail vendors now set up mobile POS stations and can move the locations as needed for special events to boost sales, which is especially advantageous during seasonal holiday events hosted at Riverbanks. Educators at Riverbanks are also leveraging iPads during instruction to a greater degree and staff can look up plants in a botany database from mobile devices while in the gardens. Riverbanks has a mobile iPad cart to allow students and guests to connect and augment their learning experiences.

Why Aerohive?

- Robust outdoor access points meet complex environmental requirements
- Ability to scale the network incrementally to meet budget and zoo needs
- Cloud-based network management has seamless interface and allows IT staff to manage events remotely
- POS stations are now mobile and have increased sales