



"Not only does Aerohive provide a top-notch wireless solution, the support we received as we set up an enterprise network from the bottom-up was invaluable. Having control at the network edge and enabling seamless integration with Dell for a unified networking infrastructure were key to the success of implementing wireless operations across the entire county. The flexibility of the solution, from having the management system on premises to controlling how employees and guests connect, as well as providing multiple avenues for enhanced security, gives us confidence that Aerohive will meet our current and future networking requirements across Emmet County."

— Matt Hellens

Director, Information Technology  
Emmet County

# Emmet County

## Emmet County Partners with Aerohive and Dell to Provide Seamless Network Connectivity

### About Emmet County

Emmet County is located in the northwest corner of the lower peninsula of Michigan and is home to approximately 32,000 residents. Tourism along the shores of Lake Michigan is a major part of the economy, providing four-season vacation attractions. In recent years, Emmet County has experienced diversified economic growth, with many new industries and more and more people settling in the area permanently. The County Seat is located in Petoskey, and larger surrounding towns include Harbor Springs, Bay Harbor and part of Mackinaw City. The County itself has over 230 employees and manages community resources, parks and recreation, the sheriff department, and many other local services for the community.

### The Challenge

With greater growth in the area, Emmet County over the last several years needed to invest in technology upgrades to better support residents who live and work in the area. Wireless networking is no longer a bonus, but an expected service across county operations. The IT Department was directed to improve the networking experience across the entire county in order to enable efficiency and mobility at its 12 locations stretching across 35 miles.

For over 100 years, Emmet County hosts the Emmet-Charlevoix County Fair each August and welcomes thousands of visitors. The County had deployed a consumer-class wireless product at the fairgrounds, but greatly needed to upgrade to an enterprise solution to meet service requirements and offer outdoor Wi-Fi. The local airport, Pellston Regional Airport, had an aging Ubiquiti Networks system in place that also needed to be replaced.

Overall, the IT department needed a wireless solution in place to offer expanded capacity, enhanced security and reliable connectivity. With an agile team of three employees, it was imperative to have a solution in place with remote management capabilities, flexible infrastructure and seamless integration with existing Dell switching and hardware solutions.

### The Solution

After expanding its fiber connectivity and continuing to deliver final mile services, Emmet County focused its efforts on choosing a wireless solution that best met current and future needs. After evaluating Meraki and Ubiquiti Networks, Emmet County learned about Aerohive Networks through its local solution partner, Avalon Technologies. Emmet County already had a significant investment and commitment to Dell and it was recommended the County take a look at Aerohive. With a formal agreement in place and shared vision for cloud-managed Wi-Fi, Emmet County would be able to manage Dell switches within the HiveManager NG cloud network management system, a tremendous benefit for simplified wired and wireless networking. With a seamless integration offering from Dell and Aerohive, and after a successful initial launch at the County Fair, Emmet County moved forward to expand the network to all additional sites. Aerohive's solution was not only the best from a pricing structure standpoint, it also allowed the County to segment users and devices for optimal security.

Alongside Dell switching infrastructure, the County deployed Aerohive AP230 and AP250 access points, outdoor AP1130 access points, and HiveManager NG for system management. With employees from local prosecutors and defense attorneys at the courthouse, to ambulance and emergency workers downloading patient data, there were numerous requirements for security and privacy. The County has set up several SSIDs to segment users and meet outside business needs, such as providing access for vendors at the fairgrounds, security cameras for the sheriff department, and enabling Wi-Fi for Planning & Zoning assessors and inspectors.

Another key advantage with Aerohive was the flexibility to have HiveManager NG Virtual Appliance on premises as a single virtual machine. With security concerns and data restrictions, this was a deciding factor to choosing a flexible infrastructure like Aerohive. Having built-in firewall policy at the AP was also instrumental, with control right at the network edge, which will also be cost effective as the County continues to grow and expand the network. Another Aerohive feature Emmet County hopes to implement in the near future includes Private Pre-Shared Key for simplified authentication without compromising security.

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