



Prince George's County Department of Parks and Recreation

Award-Winning Parks & Recreation Department Selects Aerohive for Simplified and Diverse Wi-Fi Solution

Challenges

- Wireless network required at over 100 sites across large geographic location
- Wi-Fi access established at remote facilities without fiber connection
- Greater density required a more robust Wi-Fi solution

Results

- Unified network management for both wired and wireless infrastructure
- Mobile workforce with flexible network solution across all locations, including outdoor areas
- Aerohive branch routers with embedded LTE ideal solution for multiple sites

About Prince George's County Department of Parks and Recreation

The Prince George's County Department of Parks and Recreation (the Department) is part of the larger, bi-county Maryland-National Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) and has over 130 locations across the entire county, including local and regional parks, 43 community centers, historical landmarks and properties, indoor and outdoor pools, golf facilities, rental sites, sports and arts venues, trail systems and many more sites for outdoor recreation and

activities. With administrative offices in Riverdale, Maryland, the Department also includes a Park Police division with approximately 150 officers, motorcycle and mounted equestrian units, and K-9s.

The Department has won an unprecedented six National Gold Medals for excellence in parks and recreation management, and was most recently awarded the 2015 National Gold Medal Award. The Department employs over 1,500 full time workers and manages more than 27,000 acres of parkland over approximately 500 square miles.

"We are not only now able to roll out Wi-Fi connection everywhere, which just wasn't possible previously, but we're able to deploy quickly without having a multitude of network policies to set up or requiring a technical guru on site. Aerohive enables us to provide mission-critical reliability at remote and rural locations. Having an LTE-enabled Wi-Fi solution has allowed greater mobility and efficiency and created cost efficiencies for Prince George's County Parks & Recreation."

—Will Rhodes

Network Administrator
Prince George's County Department of Parks & Recreation

The Challenge

As a national model of exemplary parks and recreation management, it is not a surprise that the Department began to seek a Wi-Fi solution many years before wireless access was considered mission-critical or relied upon as the default access layer.

At that time, the Department had deployed a Cisco wireless solution at limited locations, but with the need to expand the wireless network as it became fundamental for more and more daily operations, the Department had to seek alternate solutions. A primary motive for looking outside of Cisco was to deploy network architecture with distributed control and management. This would allow network connection at a large number of remote sites, some requiring as few

as one access point and others requiring many more. The Department will gradually expand its fiber connection to locations with larger operations, but needed a flexible solution to bring all sites, regardless of size, onto a single network.

The Department is also no stranger to the BYOD explosion. With employees bringing a greater number of personal devices to work, and with an overall increase in operational devices connecting wirelessly such as HVAC systems, Prince George's County Parks and Recreation needed to modernize the network infrastructure to accommodate greater, diversified density and connectivity requirements.

The Solution

After evaluating Cisco and learning more about Aerohive's distributed architecture, the Department determined Aerohive was the direction to take moving forward. Drawn to the flexibility and the ease of deployment, the Department first installed Aerohive at the Prince George's Sports & Learning Complex, which includes a fitness center, gymnastics facility, learning center, aquatic center, indoor track and field facility, café and vending kiosks. This expansive facility was an excellent test of how robust and agile the Aerohive network solution would prove to be.

Aside from HiveManager, Aerohive's intuitive network management system, there were also many Aerohive features that were mandated for the Department's wireless network to operate seamlessly across all locations, however remote. Aerohive BR200 branch routers running on the Verizon network with embedded LTE are ideal at remote locations to enable network access. For many sites, fiber connections are not possible or economical, and Aerohive branch routers are an ideal solution.

Will Rhodes, Senior IT Support Specialist for Prince George's County Department of Parks and Recreation has also set up "temporary kits" with Aerohive's BR200-LTE-VZ Wi-Fi router to enable Wi-Fi access anywhere as a primary or backup connection in the County at a moment's notice. Instead of having to arrange a multitude of network policies, the Department has created settings based on tags, creating an easy workflow for getting users on the network.

Rhodes also praises Aerohive's support as the company's shining star, using network engineers to maximize the benefit of features like client monitoring and troubleshooting. The Department has established several SSIDs for network segmentation, including employees, guests, and the HVAC system. Aerohive's Private Pre-Shared Key technology also allows secure and simplified authentication for devices such as Apple TVs, signboards and gaming consoles across all sites.

Together with branch routers, the Department also uses Aerohive access points and switches, and HiveManager On-Premises network management system for simplified and unified network policies. Aerohive AP121, AP230, AP330, and AP170 access points are deployed throughout the Department, as well as SR2124 and SR2148 switches and BR100 and BR200 branch routers. The Department is leveraging Aerohive's VPN Gateway for dynamic routing, including the ability to integrate with OSPF, and bring remote

sites onto corporate networks. Aerohive access points are configured to provide instant RADIUS authentication for use with Active Directory.

The Results

Deploying reliable enterprise Wi-Fi has enabled greater mobility as well as allowed the Department to provide a greater amount of services and support for its customers. With over 30,000 unique visitors per month on its network, the Department is relying on a solution that can seamlessly expand and continue to provide features that create efficiency without sacrificing security or adding exorbitant cost. With a flexible and simplified infrastructure, the Department can connect users to the appropriate network and set parameters based on user, device and access needs.

"We are not only now able to roll out Wi-Fi connection everywhere, which just wasn't possible previously, but we're able to deploy quickly without having a multitude of network policies to set up or requiring a technical guru on site," explains Rhodes. "Aerohive enables us to provide mission-critical reliability at remote and rural locations. Having an LTE-enabled Wi-Fi solution has allowed greater mobility and efficiency and created cost efficiencies for Prince George's County Parks and Recreation."

Many facilities across the county are using the wireless network in new ways. The Park Police division uses branch routers for license plate reader systems, as well as to access outdoor Wi-Fi to upload vehicle dashboard camera footage and to connect to the network for secure data transmission while still on patrol.

Residents, guests and employees can now access Wi-Fi in public places, including skate parks and boathouses, as well as at festivals and special events held throughout the year. The College Park Airport connects the network for Wi-Fi access in the pilots' lounge, which also broadcasts updated flight information and up to the minute flight patterns from Smart TVs. Golf courses offer online reservations and employees use tablets on site to check out and confirm tee times for guests.

Facility rentals are available at many locations in the Department, and many of the administrative tasks have been streamlined thanks to the Aerohive wireless solution. Employees can easily make changes to HVAC systems remotely, enable badge access, and offer guest Wi-Fi before and after events. At the Show Place Arena and Equestrian Center, the guest Wi-Fi portal includes vendor-sponsored ads, creating new revenue and promotional channels.

Flexible Path for the Future

The Department has a wireless solution in place that will not only be adaptable for future change and expansion, but can also accommodate a diverse number of locations and requirements. With Aerohive, it has been simple to meet requests and demands across a broad range of sites and functions, all within a framework of unified network management. Responding to a multitude of requirements can be overwhelming, but the Department is pleased at the simplicity of the Aerohive solution, setting up the county for future success.



Contact us today to learn how your organization can benefit from Aerohive wireless LAN architecture.

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