

Danville relies on AT&T Business for infrastructure overhaul

Business needs

Technology to support a progressive city's continuing growth

Networking solution

Internet, networking, and voice services connect multiple city properties, enabling smooth operations for vital municipal services

Business value

Reliable, secure technology

Industry focus

Municipal government

Size

27,815 residents

About the city of Danville

Danville is in Vermilion County, Illinois, and is known for its rich history and numerous museums. Danville's economy is based on agriculture (especially corn and soybeans) and various industries, notably metal products, heavy machinery, food processing, packaging, and heat transfer equipment.

The situation

City officials are progressive about deploying technology to serve Danville citizens. To ensure the best and most cost-efficient services, the city's chief technology officer recently compared various network architecture, internet, and voice services.

Solution

Danville chose AT&T Switched Ethernet with Network on Demand to connect municipal offices on the high-speed AT&T fiber network. It also selected AT&T Dedicated Internet to deliver connectivity for city employees, and AT&T IP Flexible Reach for reliable voice services.

A great place to live and work

Danville, Illinois offers a high quality of life, affordability, and friendliness. Like many small towns, it experienced economic downturns as factories and foundries closed. The community and its officials, however, worked hard to maintain the city's reputation as an exciting and evolving place to live, work, and play.

With a supportive environment for entrepreneurs and small businesses and a strong foundation of distribution and manufacturing companies, the community delivers a dynamic blend of growth opportunities. Residents are proud of the city's thriving arts and cultural community, including a symphony, performing arts organizations, festivals, art league, and beautifully renovated theaters.

Agnel DSilva, the city's Chief Technology Officer, said Danville is a wonderful place to live and work. "We've got a great team that we work with here, and Danville itself is very dear to my heart. It's a great community."

Building a network for the future

Like many municipalities, Danville had issues with connectivity in its buildings throughout the city, which support important functions like the police and fire departments, administration, and public works. To add to the difficulty, the city's network provider had not regularly upgraded the infrastructure. "As a city we have to look forward to the future and explore technological advancements," DSilva said.

The city's network includes five data centers that deliver redundancy to support vital city functions. Maintaining a network architecture with distributed workloads requires excellent connectivity. After comparing solutions from several providers, Danville chose AT&T Switched Ethernet with Network on Demand to help enhance the connectivity that city employees need to complete their duties.

The service, which enables city traffic to flow across the high-speed AT&T fiber network, gives DSilva's team a web-based dashboard that makes it easy to adjust bandwidth and prioritize mission-critical traffic. The solution delivers a secure virtual private network (VPN) and internet access via a single connection.

"AT&T offered us a better solution, with good connectivity between the buildings to help keep our services going and be more redundant. We've been happy about that," DSilva said. "And the AT&T solution offers more flexibility."

Flexibility to adjust bandwidth

To help update the city's infrastructure, AT&T Business offered a superior ethernet service. "Our former provider did not give us the flexibility in managing our ethernet service; we needed a better solution," he said. "AT&T Switched Ethernet Service is a very reliable, flexible solution. Now we can control and adjust the bandwidth at different locations. We love it."

Adjusting bandwidth is vital. "That's great for us because it can save us time; I don't have to call AT&T. I just go in there and adjust it, and within no time we can upgrade our bandwidth."

DSilva and his team need to boost bandwidth when running certain applications or doing disaster recovery planning that requires pushing mountains of data through the network. With the city's previous provider, orders for additional bandwidth could take months. "That's where our need for flexibility comes into play, and AT&T offers that bandwidth flexibility," he said. "It's all about speed, how fast can you get things done."



Cost savings, reduced complexity

AT&T Business also helped the city replace its legacy Primary Rate Interface (PRI) infrastructure, a fixed service that didn't allow the city's IT team to modify its configurations. DSilva chose AT&T IP Flexible Reach, a voice over IP solution that reduces complexity and saves money by combining voice and data over the same network.

"IP Flex allows us to work with AT&T and our phone system vendors to set up a system that works best for the city. It offers redundancy, which we didn't have before, and with AT&T the solution is all inclusive, so there's no additional charge for any of that," DSilva said.

DSilva chose the service after seeing how well it works in the county where Danville is located. "Vermilion County has been using AT&T for several years, and they rarely have any outages, other than an unexpected fiber cut somewhere because of construction."



Robust security

Danville has also had a good experience with AT&T Dedicated Internet, and DSilva is happy with the security that AT&T Business offers the city. “That’s what I like about it. We feel comfortable using their infrastructure.”

DSilva spends a lot of time researching technology options. “We don’t implement anything unless we test it out, talk to different agencies, and find something that fits best for us,” he said. “I have full trust in AT&T. We follow the cyberthreat alerts they send out every day.”

A relationship for the future

As much as Danville relies on AT&T Business networking solutions, DSilva considers the connection with AT&T Business to be most important. “The biggest advantage we have here is building a relationship with AT&T. We have not had that with any other provider in the past,” he said. “Our AT&T team knows exactly what they’re talking about. They understand our requirements and even go to the extent of researching solutions that might work better for us.”

In the past, the city sometimes had difficulty connecting with its providers. DSilva said, “Our AT&T team has been very responsive. That’s important to us because when we need something, we can’t wait for two or three weeks for an answer. The timely responses from AT&T have been very impressive.” Danville IT professionals also appreciate the expertise of their AT&T account team. “They are able to resolve our issues.”

He plans to call on AT&T Business as the city adds services. “We might add additional services, like providing employees access to our Wi-Fi band so they have connectivity to our resources and systems, basically building a private network,” he said.

As Danville city staff continue to improve the systems that support the dynamic community, DSilva expects AT&T Business to be an important part of the city’s future. “As we continue to build our relationship with AT&T, we will continue using AT&T services for our future needs. AT&T has proved to be valuable to us.”

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Chief Technology Officer, city of Danville