Extreme®

Executive Summary

Industry

- State and Local

Environment

- 802 employees
- 22 facilities
- 1 data center
- 80 switches, plus another 23 being added in 2020 at parks

Technology Needs

- Standardize switches and other networking equipment
- Upgrade infrastructure
- Connect facilities to each other and data center
- Streamline network management

Extreme Solutions

- ExtremeSwitching™
- ExtremeRouting™
- Extreme Management Center™

Results

- 100% uptime
- Fiber and wireless network across all 22 city facilities
- Standardized switches

City of Pharr Leads the Way for Other Cities with its Public Safety Initiatives and Enhancements

From a Well-Traveled International Bridge to Consoles for Crucial Public Safety Systems, This City Relies on Extreme Networks Solutions to Constantly Scale up and Improve Its Performance

Pharr, Texas is a city on the move. In 2019, the City of Pharr completed several key projects, including road and drainage infrastructure improvements, renovating parks, and developing a new state-of-the-art Public Safety Communications Building and data center.

But perhaps one of the city's largest responsibilities is the operation of the Pharr-Reynosa International Bridge, which is the country's busiest bridge for moving produce between the U.S. and Mexico. In fact, more than 175,000 vehicles traverse the bridge each month and almost 70 percent of the nation's produce crosses through here.

To handle this magnitude of projects, you need technology that's 100-percent reliable. That's why, when the City of Pharr merged the 911 dispatchers from the fire and police departments for its Public Safety Communications Building, getting the infrastructure right was paramount. "We remodeled an old building and had to get everything up to par," says Jose J. Peña, CGCIO, Director of Innovation and Technology for the City of Pharr. "All of our operations are running from the new data center there."

Prioritizing Safety for Pharr and Other Cities

In late 2018, the City of Pharr launched Tyler Technologies' New World public safety solutions, a fully integrated platform for dispatchers, police officers, firefighters, and first responders. The platform is integrated with GIS mapping and helps cities make quicker, proactive, more informed decisions.

"We are going to host other agencies on this system so we needed a network that was redundant, easily scalable, and won't ever go down," says Peña. "We use Extreme Networks' products because they allow us to build a lot of redundant paths so that we are always fully operational."

In regard to the new dispatch center, there are 14 9-1-1 dispatch consoles, with five currently in use, which allows for future growth. Peña's team dispatches public safety systems for three smaller cities as well as Pharr, and will be starting to do regional medical dispatching as well. In fact, Peña says the City of Pharr is working on becoming a Tri-ACE accredited dispatch center—the first in Texas and the 11th in the nation. "Our city council and administration are very proactive," he says. "They get us the resources and it's our job to get it done."

> *"We're opening a new Civic Center and Park Administration building in early 2020 and are connecting the two facilities through fiber to their Extreme switch, we never run out of things to do and projects to work on."*
>
> **Jose J. Peña, CGCIO, Director of innovation and Technology, City of Pharr**

Building a Reliable Infrastructure

When Peña first got to Pharr, there was a mix of switches and other products, particularly at the public libraries. One of his first priorities was to standardize across the board. "We wanted to make sure every switch is on a UPS so we never go down, either because of a power or product failure," he says.

Pharr has now upgraded to a fiber and wireless network across its 22 city facilities. They use Extreme Networks' ExtremeSwitching, ExtremeRouting, and Extreme Management Center. "We run hyper-converged servers and everything is connected to core switching for improved communication," says Peña.

Over at the two-mile-long Pharr-Reynosa International Bridge, there are 70 video cameras in place to help the police department handle security. Some of the cameras are infrared below the bridge, housed in metal closures that are connected to the main office via fiber using Extreme Industrial switches. In addition, every toll booth has eight cameras.

A Dedicated Staff Makes the Difference

With a department of only 14 employees to handle all things IT, including cybersecurity, security training, programming, and web development, it's important to have products that perform exceptionally well. "Our event center hosts concerts and other programs, and the infrastructure is very important. Our sound system vendor relies on Wi-Fi and network connectivity," says Peña.

The IT team also runs the town's libraries, which have about 100 computers that get nearly nonstop usage. "Wi-Fi has to be operational; we run a gigabit internet service to them."

For Peña, Extreme Networks makes sense. "We used Extreme products at my previous agency and were very satisfied. The company offers great support and working through updates is easy as well," says Peña. "Extreme always works for us."

"Extreme makes it really easy to add VLANs to networks, especially when compared with other vendors and products out there," says Alex Velazquez, Systems and Security Manager for the city of Pharr.

More Projects in 2020 and Beyond

In the next fiscal year, Pharr is going to implement the Parks Safety project, which includes emergency call box, Wi-Fi, and surveillance cameras at all city parks; upgrade video surveillance at the police department; and upgrade all body cameras and in-car recording systems for its police officers. Peña says he's always looking for ways to improve operations and reviewing the newest products to boost functionality.

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