BIG BEAR LAKE DELIVERS GREAT VISITOR EXPERIENCES WITH CLOUD-MANAGED NETWORKING

Summary

Company:
Big Bear Lake Visitors Center

Industry:
Travel and Hospitality

Business Challenges:
Leverage technology to grow tourism at popular Southern California mountain lake

Technology Solution:
Cloud-based wired and wireless network from Juniper and Aerohive, consisting of:

- *Juniper Sky Enterprise*
- *Aerohive access points*
- *EX2300 Ethernet Switch*
- *SRX340 Services Gateway*

Business Results:

- *Simplified collaboration with local businesses and partners to grow tourism*
- *Improved network performance and reliability with business-grade solution*
- *Made network management quick and easy*
- *Strengthened security controls*

Summer or winter, Big Bear Lake has something for everyone. People come for a weekend ski getaway, to show off their barbeque mastery, find the ultimate trail, or just kick back and wait for a glimpse of a bald eagle. An alpine mountain resort about 100 miles outside of Los Angeles, sunshine and snow are plentiful. And while fishing or mountain biking might be on visitors' agendas, so is staying connected.

Bringing Big Bear Lake into the modern age was Matt McCabe's goal. A lifelong resident of Big Bear, McCabe manages the Big Bear Visitors Center at Big Bear Visitors Bureau. "As a destination marketing organization, it became a priority to use technology to step into the 21st century," says McCabe.

An alpine community, however, poses certain connectivity challenges. Cell service can be spotty. Landline phones go out in bad weather. High-speed broadband is pricey. But great connectivity is necessary to run a business—and to meet visitors' expectations for a great trip.

Head to the Cloud

"We wanted to go where everyone is going, and that is the cloud," says McCabe.

Big Bear Visitors Center turned to Blue Chip Computer Systems, a solutions provider in Los Angeles' vibrant Silicon Beach community, for expert assistance in modernizing its IT systems.

A cloud-managed wired and wireless solution from Juniper Networks and Aerohive gave Big Bear the enterprise-grade capabilities it needed without getting tangled up in complexity. The joint solution provides a simple-to-deploy, easy-to-manage cloud-based network infrastructure. Juniper provides high-performance, cloud-managed switching while Aerohive delivers cloud management for its wireless access points. The Juniper® Sky™ Enterprise management solution provides visibility into Aerohive access points, creating a single pane-of-glass solution for managing both wired and wireless devices.

The Juniper Networks® EX Series Ethernet Switch provides enterprise network access, while the Juniper Networks SRX Series Security Gateway provides high-performance firewall services while also consolidating security, routing, switching, and WAN connectivity.

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- Matt McCabe, visitor services manager, Big Bear Visitors Bureau

"The network is at the core of our business," says McCabe. "Working with our local businesses, accessing applications and making phone calls wouldn't be possible without a bulletproof network from Juniper."

Employee frustrations have virtually disappeared. Microsoft Office 365 is fast and reliable. The staff can host videoconferences in its meeting room. Collaborating with business partners is far simpler. "Pulling massive video files off our server used to be a nightmare," says McCabe. "Once we moved to a Juniper network, we can transfer those files easily back and forth with our creative agencies."

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Big Bear also moved to 3CX, an open unified communications and collaboration platform hosted by Blue Chip. Phone service is now top-notch, eliminating problems with sound quality and intermittent outages. "Before, the phone lines wouldn't work when there was bad weather and the Internet wasn't available," says McCabe. "Now, we're unlikely to see the phone system go down."

New visibility into application and network usage helps the visitors' bureau perform at a higher level. "In a professional environment, we need to prevent content that is inappropriate or offensive from being viewed by our staff," says McCabe. "We're light years ahead of what we had before, and Juniper made it easy."

Going to cloud has an aesthetic benefit for Big Bear, too. "The server room was an eyesore," says McCabe. "Now we have minimized the equipment in there."

Deliver Great Visitor Experiences

With a business-grade network, Big Bear can offer free Wi-Fi that will attract more visitors to popular events like the Chili Cook-off, Trout Derby, and the Big Bear Art Walk, as well as new events. "In the past, we could never provide Wi-Fi at events, even as a courtesy," says McCabe.

When Big Bear expected more than 13,000 people for the Grill & Chill over Memorial Day weekend, it was able to quickly extend its network to the parking lot, where the barbeque and beer festival was being held. The network delivered on guests' and performers' expectations for great connectivity, and for the first time, vendors could accept electronic payments at their booths.

Simple, Business-Grade Networking

With the Juniper network, business-grade networking was no longer out of reach for Big Bear. "We saved money with Juniper, and the performance has been better than ever before," says McCabe.

McCabe handles ongoing network operations. He has a real-time view of network performance and switch configuration and, if needed, he can make configuration changes through the intuitive, web-based Juniper Sky Enterprise portal.

Best of all, when McCabe needs expert help, Blue Chip is just a text message away. "I don't have a deep background in IT," he says. "But I do need to understand how IT works, because I need to be able to troubleshoot if a technician isn't available." To learn more about networking, McCabe went through Juniper training. "I got more familiar with administering a business-grade network. It empowered us to handle more on our own," he says.

Ron Herman, president of Blue Chip, agrees. "I want a customer's solution to last ten years. It's not a good value if the customer has to upgrade in a few years because they've run out of horsepower," he says. "With Juniper, Big Bear has a core network for anything that they want to do in the future."

Share the Adventure

"My goal is to serve our community and use the best tools at our disposal to increase the strength of our tourism economy," says McCabe. "Because we have better technology, we're able to do our jobs better."

"We have to engage on a technology level on par with everyone else," says McCabe. "We answer to our board of directors and stakeholders who are lodging suppliers and vacation homeowners," says McCabe. "If we can help their business grow, it helps other businesses grow, because people spend more money at restaurants, grocery stores, and gas stations. as well as every other kind of business in our community."

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For More Information

To find out more about Juniper Networks products and solutions, please visit www.juniper.net.

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Juniper Networks brings simplicity to networking with products, solutions and services that connect the world. Through engineering innovation, we remove the constraints and complexities of networking in the cloud era to solve the toughest challenges our customers and partners face daily. At Juniper Networks, we believe that the network is a resource for sharing knowledge and human advancement that changes the world. We are committed to imagining groundbreaking ways to deliver automated, scalable and secure networks to move at the speed of business.

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