Case Study

Schuyler Hospital Enables Critical Communications Infrastructure for September Hill Women’s Center with a D-Link Business Class Wireless Solution

Secure Access to Patient Care System with a Robust Wireless Communications Network Able to Survive the Harshest of New York Winter Weather Conditions

The Challenge

The main building on the Schuyler Hospital campus houses the acute care and emergency room services. Further up the hill a secondary facility, the Primary Care Center, shares a fiber optic communications link between the two buildings. About a quarter mile up the road is a third facility called the September Hill Women’s Center which offers wellness programs and services designed for the special health needs of women. Unfortunately, the September Hill facility was isolated from a data communications standpoint from the other hospital facilities. The growing needs for information access to patient care systems as well as a desire to optimize Internet access, drove the hospital to search for a solution.

The hospital contacted Mike Semel of Databranch, a leading IT solutions provider serving New York and Pennsylvania. Semel and his team started to work out some possible solutions. Initially they considered installation of another fiber optic cable to the September Hill facility. The installation of fiber would have required trenching across a parking lot, been very disruptive, and would have cost much more than the hospital was willing to spend. If the communications requirements for that building were to change in the future, the hospital saw the expense of a fiber installation as “lost or unrecoverable money.”

After some research on alternatives, Semel proposed a wireless solution for interconnecting the September Hill facility. The installation would be quick, unobtrusive, and offer the flexibility of redeployment if communications requirements were to change in the future. The only potential concern raised with the proposal was that outdoor wireless equipment mounted on the buildings would need to be robust enough to handle the harsh winter conditions that the Montour Falls area could provide. "The D-Link solution seemed to provide us a platform that would easily meet our current requirements and offered the flexibility to grow with the hospital’s needs. It just seemed like the smart money choice,” commented Don Lewis, President and Chief Executive Officer of Schuyler Hospital.

The Solution

Semel and team decided on the DWL-2700AP Wireless Access Point from D-Link. The DWL-2700AP has five operational modes to choose from including a remote bridging mode that enabled a 54 Mbps IEEE 802.11g compliant wireless link between the Primary Care Center and the September Hill facility. The multiple modes of the DWL-2700AP made the D-Link equipment a very flexible solution that could change and adapt if communications requirements were to shift. “The D-Link solution also included some very important "cold weather" features that made it a perfect fit for the hospital. The outdoor access points from D-Link stood above the competition by offering a rugged, watertight protective housing and including a temperature sensor and built-in heater. These features were put to the test the following winter. While the temperatures ranged to 18 degrees below zero one frigid day, the wireless network continued to operate without incident. “I remember waking up that particular morning and thinking that the first thing I had to do was to call the hospital and make sure that September Hill was still online,” commented Semel.

Customer Profile:
Schuyler Hospital
Montour Falls, NY

Located in the heart of the Finger Lakes in Montour Falls, New York, Schuyler Hospital provides comprehensive acute medical-surgical care, emergency care and skilled nursing care. Established in 1920, Schuyler Hospital is a 169-bed acute and long-term care hospital providing services to nearly 32,000 residents of Schuyler County and the surrounding communities. Schuyler Hospital employs over 500 people with a dedicated medical staff of physicians practicing internal medicine, obstetrics, surgery, orthopedics, pathology, radiology, pediatrics, anesthesiology, sleep medicine and pain management.

"The D-Link solution seemed to provide us a platform that would easily meet our current requirements and offered the flexibility to grow with the hospital’s needs. It just seemed like the smart money choice.”

- Don Lewis
President and CEO
Schuyler Hospital
The installation of the two D-Link access points could not have been easier. The hospital maintenance team physically installed the DWL-2700AP access points themselves while Semel and team handled the few simple steps of equipment configuration. To everyone's pleasant surprise, the units booted up and started operating without a hitch on the first attempt. Instantly, September Hill was online and connected with the rest of the hospital. The 54 Mbps wireless LAN system easily provided the level of performance and response time that the hospital needed for their patient care applications.

Additionally, the connection to the rest of the hospital also provided the September Hill facility with Internet access. By providing Internet access to the building, the need for a separate and expensive broadband service to September Hill from the cable company was no longer needed. The monthly recurring fee from cancellation of that redundant Internet access link also contributed to additional cost savings brought about by the D-Link solution.

The successful and uneventful installation just confirmed the confidence that Semel and team had in their solution. "The D-Link access points allowed the hospital to save over 60% of the costs of other solutions. The APs also offered us tremendous flexibility of deployment for a growing and changing environment and most importantly, the equipment simply worked from day one," recalled Semel.

Since the initial test of the freshly installed access points, the D-Link wireless solution was immediately forged into service and has been performing without fail. By providing the September Hill Women's Center facility with this critical network infrastructure, the physicians and staff now have the connectivity and data access to key online patient care systems available throughout the hospital. Those key care systems brought to September Hill by the D-Link wireless solution enabled the staff to continue to provide the level of care that the citizens of the Schuyler County - Watkins Glen area have come to expect from Schuyler Hospital.