



CASE STUDY

Alamance County centralized and secured communications with FortiVoice



Alamance County located in North Carolina is a region encompassing many rural towns and cities. The county is responsible for many of the services offered to the residents including the sheriff's department, health department, social services, finance, and many more. The county manages over 23 different departments offering a variety of services. Their main focus is on the correct routing of calls and effective handling priority of emergency calls, while maintaining a working solution that will allow for growth without breaking the county's budget.

Searching For a Solution

Their previous service was comprised of AT&T Centrex phone lines to each group and multiline phones. As the county had "no control over the management to make any moves or changes," explained Paul Boback, Network Operations Manager, IT decided they need to look for a new solution. The county researched phone systems, looking for consolidated solutions that are easy to implement and manage, while allowing for growth and flexibility in the future. It became clear that an on-premises solution would be the best fit, but the vendor still needed to be determined.

Alamance County was looking for a centralized system that allowed easy-to-use call control and features. When Fortinet presented the solution to them, they had listened closely to the requirements and helped ensure what was provided really did meet their needs. It was a positive engagement with sales and, "We felt that we mattered," said Bruce Walker, Alamance County Assistant County Manager / IT Director. "This feeling continues today with any follow up communications between the groups."

Centralized Voice Solution

The VoIP-based FVE-3000E phone system Alamance County chose gave them the features they needed without being overly complicated and requiring numerous add-ons or licenses compared to the competition. The FortiVoice solution came in at a very competitive price, and with the simplicity of the models it made the decision easy for them.

One of the largest concerns about the centralized and VoIP solution was that IT had been managing all of the departments and their configurations. FortiVoice allows each department to manage their own extensions and groups, which helps eliminate the work for IT staff, who can focus on the core system settings instead.

"Fortinet is a major player in the technology sector known for their security products. The FortiVoice solution just adds to their arsenal of being a complete solution company."

– Paul Bobak
Network Operations Manager
Alamance County

Details

Customer: Alamance County

Location: Alamance County,
North Carolina

“We handle roughly 1400 calls a day, so efficiency and uptime are imperative for us,” said Bobak. The calls are handled by various departments and routed based upon the number dialed or the selection that user has made. Being able to easily change configurations and manage the system from a central location has made life easier for the IT group. The power and ease of use of the call routing allows each caller to be sent to the correct group or department. When combined with the rich Auto Attendants (which can provide callers with information to best route their calls or provide them information to handle their needs), the system truly helps reduce resource needs and improves efficiency.

Business Impact

- Centralized call control
- Easy and flexible solution
- Minimize operational overhead
- Cost-effective solution

Building a Relationship

One of the key benefits that Alamance County found while working with Fortinet is that when questions about additional features were brought up, there was a willingness to listen. Alamance County staff members felt that they were being heard. This continued effort helped to build a strong relationship and help improve the system features not only for the county but for other customers as well.

Alamance County leveraged a number of key players to assist with the deployment, including on-site sales engineers and professional services to help set up the system and provide guidance in future configuration modifications. On the day of the cut-over, all teams were ready and the transition took less than an hour. According to Bobak, “It was one of the smoothest cutovers we have ever done.” By 9:00 a.m. the system was routing calls and all 780 phones went live. “Everything went exactly as planned,” he added.

The FortiVoice system was installed a few months ago, and things have been running smoothly. Since deployment they have only had one hiccup as they fine-tuned the system for everyone’s needs. When looking back at their decision to go with FortiVoice, Bobak said, “We would make the same decision if we had to do it again.”

After deployment, Alamance County’s IT team has worked with the Fortinet support team to help answer any questions or concerns that they have with the system or changes that need to be made. “Fortinet support is second to none,” stated Bobak. This has also helped reinforce their confidence in the decision to go with FortiVoice. As much attention has been given after the sale as before it. Bobak added, “The support team has been responsive and answers questions quickly.”

Building on Success

The success of the FortiVoice solution has opened up doors to other projects within Alamance County. One of the key projects underway is the move to a two-factor authentication model to improve security, centralize policies, and control access across their network. Alamance County had been evaluating various vendors’ products but after reviewing FortiAuthenticator, the decision became clear. FortiAuthenticator VM is a key solution which works with both soft and hard tokens, which is critical due to the security surrounding the county and law requirements. Additionally, FortiAuthenticator will allow them to be Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) compliant.

With the creation of the centralized call control, Bobak realized that their core network strategy needed reviewing as well. Using a FortiGate enterprise firewall, they will be able to segment the network and help control both data and voice packets and ensure optimal traffic flow. These systems will help round out their network for control and efficiency providing a complete solution.

“Fortinet is for real, a major player in the technology sector known for their security products,” stated Bobak. “The FortiVoice solution just adds to their arsenal of a being complete solution company.”



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