



The City of Burnsville, MN

Burnsville, a southern suburb of Minneapolis and St. Paul, serves as a gateway to the Twin Cities. Spread over twenty-six square miles with 62,000 citizens, Burnsville has a large commercial and industrial base. It's a forward-looking city that depends on technology to improve efficiencies and productivity. "We are a very progressive city," said Tom Venables, information technology director for the City of Burnsville. "Our City Council's goal is to implement advanced technology solutions that streamline processes and reduce costs."

CUSTOMER

- City of Burnsville, MN

INDUSTRY

- Local government

CHALLENGES

- Consolidate multiple systems
- Improve customer service
- Streamline processes

SOLUTION

- UNIVERGE® SV7000
- UNIVERGE® MA4000 Management System
- Ongoing services from Matrix Communications, Inc.

RESULTS

- One simplified communications system
- Improved communications processes
- Centralized management
- Enhanced customer communications
- State-of-the-art applications for employee productivity

CHALLENGES

Less than a year ago, the City of Burnsville was already a satisfied NEC customer; however, its telecommunications system was 15 years old and had already been upgraded once. The main PBX switch and handsets were facing major maintenance issues. The city had deployed multiple supplementary systems across its nine facilities, including city hall with police and fire administration, two fire stations, community TV facility, golf course, maintenance building, water treatment facility, youth center and ice center.

With their technology orientation, Venables and others on the decision-making team had already decided they would select a Voice over IP (VoIP) telecommunications system. "We had been reviewing VoIP for about five years. We wanted a way to use our current infrastructure to consolidate all nine facilities into one system and also have the latest technology to carry us into the future. VoIP was the best technology for us for now and in the future," Venables said.

Burnsville hired technology consultant Tom Pavek of Elert and Associates, Stillwater, MN, to guide the city through the RFP and selection process. "What intrigued me about the Matrix / NEC solution was that it brought voice communications to the next level," said Pavek.

CHALLENGES (CONT.)

Millo said Burnsville wanted to centralize its network and be able to manage multiple sites from one location. They also wanted to simplify their system and make rapid changes to the whole network as a result of consolidating their voice and IT networks.

“The new system has been overwhelmingly well received and has met or exceeded our goals. It’s gone so well, we haven’t heard any complaints,” Venables said.

In addition to its administrative needs, Burnsville wanted to improve customer service. “We wanted people to be able to call the main number at city hall and be easily transferred to the right department in another facility. We also wanted to expand voice mail across the system but still have a person answering the main numbers.” Venables said.

SOLUTION

Burnsville officials looked at several vendors and also considered the IP capabilities of their current NEC 2400 system. “We knew we could trust the dependability of an NEC solution and count on our relationship with Matrix. We felt comfortable continuing our relationship with NEC,” Venables said.

“Although the city considered an upgrade to their 2400 system, a new UNIVERGE® SV7000 pure VoIP system was the right choice,” Millo said. “It fit their needs perfectly,” he added.

“The SV7000 was truly an IP solution that would allow us to extend our current NEC features and make everything transparent to end users. That was very attractive to us. We also wanted to make the transition as easy as possible for all users,” Venables said.

While ease of transition was important, other features important to Burnsville’s selection of the SV7000 system, included:

- Leveraging current network infrastructure. All components of the SV7000 VoIP seamlessly integrated with the existing NEC traditional telephony system.
- Centralized management. A UNIVERGE® MA4000 management system provides a single point of administration and security integration.
- System scalability. The SV7000 fits Burnsville’s needs today and can easily be added to in the future. It is flexible, modular and scalable.
- Redundancy and fail-over capability. This capability is very important to a city government that needs a system that will not fail in an emergency. Back up can be done by more than one facility.
- Direct dial numbers. All employees now have direct dial numbers and voice mail, including all police and fire personnel. Now police officers can give out their direct numbers to facilitate communications 24/7.



SOLUTION (CONT.)

Burnsville purchased OpenWorX®, a suite of smart applications that provides a more centralized point for information sharing.

OpenWorX applications include:

- Personal Call Assistant. City employees can place and return calls, identify incoming calls and auto-dial calls, all from an icon on their computer screen.
- Communications Portal. About 225 city employees can now unify their voice, email messages and fax capabilities in one place on their desktop computer.

Additionally, Burnsville implemented enhanced applications to improve the city's call handling and communication efficiencies.

These applications included:

- Automatic Call Distribution. Burnsville wanted to be able to easily route calls to the most appropriate city employee in the shortest time possible. "We no longer shuffle callers in many directions," Venables said.
- Call Accounting. The city can now monitor call activity, analyze calling information and allocate costs.
- Voice Mail. All city employees are now on one centralized voice mail system which allows for unified communications capabilities across the city.

The entire implementation, from contract to installation, was completed within a six-week period. Programming the new NEC UNIVERGE® SV7000 system took only a few hours using the advanced installation manager application. "On the night we cut over, we switched 170 telephones in just three hours and it was a smooth process. There was no downtime," Venables said.

RESULTS

Although the system has only been in place several months, communications have improved internally and externally. Venables said, "The new system has been overwhelmingly well received and has met or exceeded our goals. It has gone so well, we haven't heard any complaints."

"As with any new system, we didn't want to overwhelm our staff with all the new features at one time, so we are still using a phased-in approach, but all of our processes regarding the phone system have improved."

"Our users bought into all of our claims. They were expecting the worst and they received the best," he concluded.