

Success Story



March 2005

Yakima Valley School Goes Wireless Secure System Links Remote Nursing Stations to Administration

With more than 80 computers and 123 computer users located throughout its 32-acre nursing facility, the Yakima Valley School needed a way to provide a secure network for the transmission of critical client records and other documentation to be shared with the nursing center. By installing a wireless system from Madge Limited, a global supplier of advanced networking product solutions, Yakima Valley School was able to provide a secure and efficient system for transmitting remote client data that has greatly improved staff efficiency, client care and provided a significant return on investment.

Yakima Valley School

Yakima Valley School, founded in 1958, is a state and federally funded and certified nursing facility operated by the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, Division of Developmental Disabilities. Home to 93 permanent residents, the facility is located near Yakima in Selah, Washington. In addition to its permanent residents, the Yakima Valley School provides a 19-bed respite program. With a professional and administrative staff numbering 285 people, Yakima Valley School provides 24-hour residential care to people with developmental disabilities.

Yakima Valley School provides its residents with medical evaluations, nursing exams and treatments, behavior consultations, dental hygiene services, therapy services, speech therapy, specialized dietary services and recreational programs.

The Challenge

The school encompasses more than 32 acres in this rural mountainous community with a main facility and 14 residential cottages. With computers located in the main facility, nurses and other staff working with residents would have to manually gather client information from each of the remote nursing stations and then travel daily to the central computing area to input the data critical to keeping residents' records current and in compliance.

"The system was inefficient, time-consuming and error-prone," according to Rodney Kluever, IT Systems Specialist. "We had to figure out a way to integrate a secure network of computers into nine nursing stations throughout the facility – and do so at a reasonable cost."

Kluever looked at several possible solutions, including a fiber optic network that not only would have required a costly installation but also would have necessitated cumbersome and disruptive construction.

Investigating other possibilities, Kluever was alerted to a new wireless system introduced by Madge Limited. Recognizing that the Madge solution would overcome the

challenges faced by the organization, Kluever worked through California-based reseller, GovPlace, Intranetworking Systems, Inc. (INSI), Olympia, WA, and Madge Limited, to install an authentication server to test the system.

"We had an additional challenge in that the State Data Security Group, which had to authorize the solution, was convinced that wireless couldn't provide the necessary security. But, once they saw the Madge system in action, we got an immediate buy-off," Kluever said. "No other vendor could provide us with the level of service and security that Madge offered."

The Solution

To get the signal out to the individual cottages, each located in cul-de-sacs throughout the 32-acre facility, Kluever installed Tsunami high gain directional antennas on top of each of the buildings. The directional antennas plugged into the Tsunami subscriber units and the subscriber units plugged into the Madge wireless access point. According to Kluever, there is one access point per cul-de-sac that services all the wireless computers for each area. Within each workstation is a Madge PCI bridge and wireless cards.

"Madge has truly been a partner in this endeavor. They showed me how to check the authentication server for maximum security and everything else I needed to know to get 123 staff members using 80 offsite computers and three servers communicating with the central server," Kluever said.

The Results

The Yakima Valley School has seen tremendous results in the quality and quantity of information that's now being distributed quickly, efficiently and most importantly, securely, between supervisors in the central facility and the line staff throughout the facility.

"With this increased communication, we are able to better insure client safety as well as their privacy as federally mandated by HIPAA. We no longer have to print out hard copies of records and deliver them to the main facility. Everything is executed securely, via email," Kluever said.

"Madge technical and sales staff is in constant contact with us," Kluever said. "That makes a real difference to know they are truly a partner and always available and responsive. In an environment like ours, money is limited. We were able to implement this solution at a very low cost, which has allowed us to free up money to improve the quality of life for our residents."

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