

Case Study

The Cliffs Residential Communities Travelers Rest, South Carolina

PROVIDING LUXURIOUS LIVING IN NATURAL SURROUNDINGS

The Cliffs (www.cliffscommunities.com) offer the simple pleasures of life through premier, private, master-planned residential communities nestled in the heart of the Carolina Crescent—the leading edge of the Blue Ridge Mountains extending between Asheville, North Carolina and Greenville, South Carolina. Collectively bordered by over one million acres of pristine parklands, including 14 state parks and over 26,000 acres of fresh water lakes, The Cliffs Communities offer homes and home sites in four inspiring landscapes.

THE BUSINESS CHALLENGE— UNIFYING REMOTE LOCATIONS; CUTTING COSTS

The Cliffs Communities needed a communications system that would enable them to seamlessly unify their multiple, remote locations.

"The remoteness of the locations that we have—one at the lake, one at the mountain, one in the valley and our new location at Walnut Cove—is the large attraction to our clientele. We have to provide high-speed access to the Internet and high-speed digital lines for our phone systems. Our communications have to be instantaneous

without any delay," explained Steve Morgan, MIS director for The Cliffs.

In addition to unifying their dispersed locations, The Cliffs wanted their new system to generate cost savings that would produce a measurable return on investment (ROI). "The communication cost that we initially had before Inter-Tel was approximately \$18,000-\$20,000 per month in communication services," stated David Walters, director of purchasing for The Cliffs. "We basically had a mission assigned to us to figure out a way to cut those costs," Walters further added.

THE INTER-TEL SOLUTION— NETWORKING GEOGRAPHICALLY DISPERSED LOCATIONS

American Communications, an Inter-Tel solutions provider located in South Carolina, provided The Cliffs with an Inter-Tel Converged Communications Platform, a highly flexible, scalable and integrated system, which delivers a feature-rich solution that is migration-friendly and Internet-ready. With their new platform, The Cliffs was able to connect all of their locations via Internet Protocol (IP). Seamless connectivity via the Inter-Tel platform enabled employees to work more closely and customers to be handled more efficiently. Everything that can be done in one location can be done between geographically dispersed locations.



FAST FACT...

With the deployment of an Inter-Tel platform, IP networking and Managed Services, The Cliffs generates significant ROI daily.



“The Cliffs had several locations and none of them were networked. They needed to be transparently networked using the Inter-Tel platform. This would allow them to dial each location by extension, eliminate a lot of long distance and local services, and utilize all of the features of the Inter-Tel system,” said Joey Justice, president of American Communications.

“Basically we customized the system to where all of their locations could take multiple phone calls from any location. They could take tee times for all of their courses at one location. You can call any location and be transferred to any of their other sites transparently whether they’re in South Carolina or North Carolina, or to Scotland or British Columbia where they have other sites,” elaborated Justice.

Networking their locations allowed The Cliffs to fulfill their cost-cutting mission as well. “The Cliffs of Glassy is the course on top of the mountain. They have a hard time getting local exchange companies to service them in that area, and of course, long distance is at a premium as well. By networking the sites together, anytime The Cliffs of Glassy makes a long distance call it’s routed, by automatic route select, through the Inter-Tel platform, through The Cliffs of Glassy clubhouse and out through a local carrier, as well as a lower cost long distance carrier,” stated Justice.

With the Inter-Tel Managed Services approach, American Communications delivered a strategic plan designed to further help The Cliffs improve profitability, as well as productivity.

“By using the Inter-Tel Managed Services, we looked at all of their local and long distance, WAN charges and what they needed with the Inter-Tel hardware. By doing that, we provided an ROI. By using the Inter-Tel financing solution, we gave them an eight-year warranty, an upgrade path and a fixed cost. By putting those together with the savings they had on their local, long distance and WAN, and the fixed cost on the hardware—the Managed Services program was the only way to go,” Justice explained.

“There is a plan in place to recognize an ROI that would almost cover the entire price of the initial investment. We’re making a lot of progress in that area and saving a lot of money every day from using the system,” said Morgan.

WHY INTER-TEL

The Cliffs discovered that their communications needs were best fulfilled by what Inter-Tel had to offer. “We found that although there were three other companies at the time that were offering a Voice over IP product, which was relatively new on the market at the time, the only one that had what was considered transparent VoIP, was Inter-Tel,” explained Steve Fender, system administrator for The Cliffs.

“When we looked at the cost comparison and the type of technology it was, the packet prioritization we could do, the reduction of required bandwidth to the network—as far as what the standard cost models were—Inter-Tel’s products seemed to be the best for the expandability we needed,” explained Fender.

The Cliffs also found that Inter-Tel and its affiliates were committed to managing, coordinating and planning for their diverse communications needs, and delivering the support and service they needed—now and tomorrow.

“When we chose a vendor, such as American Communications and Inter-Tel, we need for them to be more of a partner in what we do as opposed to just a vendor, someone we just pay to perform a service. This is very integral in what we do—because we want our vendors to feel the same way about our end product as we do,” said Fender.

“From a customer service standpoint, one of the things that we liked about Inter-Tel and American Communications was their ability to service all of our locations,” stated Walters. “I think Inter-Tel has a good product and they stand behind what they do. We’re very happy with what we have,” Walters concluded.

A video of this case study on CD is available upon request (Part # 835.2817).



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