

MetroMesh™ Success Story

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Improving Education in West Texas

Floydada Texas, the self-proclaimed “Pumpkin Capital of the U. S. A.” is the county seat for Floyd County, a productive farming area in West Texas. A town of about 4,000 people, it enjoys a small town charm with an historic past.

Traditional values, such as education, are important to the town’s people. When a grant of Apple iBooks dramatically increased the test scores of the junior high school students, the Floydada Independent School District (ISD) proceeded to purchase laptops for each high school student.

Today, the program puts more than 700 computers in the hands of students and faculty at the 6-12 grade levels.

The school board saw that increasing communication among all elements of a student’s environment, including teachers and parents, is key to improving test scores. “Overall use of the Internet and computers in learning demands new models for teaching. It’s more in tune with the way youngsters learn,” said Jerry Vaughn, Superintendent, Floydada Independent School District. “The millennium students want to be connected any time, any where, whether it’s their education or their life outside of school.” Blue Moon Solutions from nearby Lubbock was engaged to create a wireless network that could connect students and their educational resources, including online resources and teachers. The requirements were demanding. The network needed to cover the town’s central area, where the schools are located, the 1,300 homes where the students and faculty live, and everywhere in between.

Blue Moon chose a metro-scale wireless network based on Tropos Networks™ wireless routers and software. “The entire system was up and running in 60 days,” said Marty Hale, CEO of Blue Moon Solutions, “but that’s because there was a lot of snow and ice.”

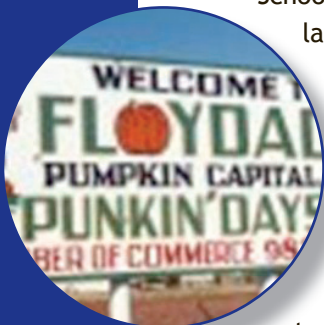
Floydada is one of the first 10 cities in Texas to provide metro-scale Wi-Fi, and among the first 500 cities nationwide. Now that citywide Wi-Fi is available to all, the educational environment at Floydada schools has really improved. According to Vaughn, “Now that students have 24/7 access to powerful digital learning tools, attendance is up, disciplinary referrals are down, and student engagement is at an all-time high.”

Tropos & Blue Moon Deliver

Tropos® offers solutions that are quick and cost-effective to install, while providing lower operating costs than competing solutions. Tropos enabled Blue Moon Solutions to deliver broadband connectivity for \$14.95 for students, \$19.95 for faculty and staff, and \$29.95 - \$49.95 for residential and business services. No specialized equipment is needed for the student’s laptops, as the technology works with Wi-Fi capabilities that are standard equipment with virtually every portable PC. The service delivers connectivity throughout the city, including schools, home, work, parks, and library. With over 450 people signed up in the first month, the operation was cash-flow positive from the beginning.

Proven products and technologies from Tropos Networks helped smooth the way to fast deployment and customer satisfaction.

The entire wireless system is based on standards-based 802.11 Wi-Fi. Over 250 million Wi-Fi devices have shipped. This eliminates the need to install specialized subscriber equipment, dramatically reduces customer support



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*“Initiative such as this help students meet the No Child Left Behind Act without any additional funding,”
says Marty Hale.*

issues, while delivering true broadband speeds – 1-5 megabits per second. Tropos wireless routers were mounted on municipal streetlights, using conventional public utility resources.



More than using wireless hardware that's purpose-built for municipal environments, Tropos software helps keep costs down and service availability way up. “Automated discovery and optimization really helped reduce installation and maintenance” said Mr. Hale. “People in close communities like Floydada expect high levels of service, and we

are able to provide that while leveraging our central network operations in Lubbock.”

The efficient, self-healing mesh architecture and interference control provide maximum uptime – if a router goes down or is taken offline for maintenance, the network automatically adjusts coverage. The result? The system was up and running in less than two months. Tropos Networks metro-scale wireless networks are quicker to deploy, less expensive to maintain, easier to

expand, and cost less to purchase than other competing wireless technologies. Tropos technology has been deployed in over 500 cities and 30 countries worldwide.

Looking Ahead

The town fathers are studying how they can leverage the school district's success. Tropos products enable multiple user communities to securely share a single network. There is enormous potential for public safety and public health officials to become more productive. For example, county sheriffs will have access to information such as fingerprints, mug shots, and hazardous material information when and where they need it; paramedics will be able to communicate vital signs with emergency personnel while transporting patients.

The potential long term benefits from wide-area wireless networks are significant, creating and environment that attracts and keeps knowledge workers. But the technology is already showing educational benefits, and supplying another reason why Floydada is a great place to live.

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