



Sto:lo Nation

Local government is designed to take action and make decisions that promote the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of its communities. An IP-based communications solution maximizes government efficiency, improving agencies' ability to share information interdepartmentally and across other relative organizations.

The **Sto:lo Nation** is one of the governing bodies for the Sto:lo tribal community of Greater Vancouver (British Columbia). Located in Chilliwack, the tribal council supports employment, education, social, health and civil services for 13 different bands (approximately 3,000 people) of Sto:lo First Nations. Upgrading to an NEC UNIVERGE communications solution reduced the tribal council's total cost of ownership, while improving employee productivity and public safety.

CHALLENGES

The Sto:lo Nation's antiquated legacy communication solution consisted of a separate, unconnected solution in each of its three adjacent office buildings, which posed a number of financial and legal challenges.

Improper backup and network connectivity made Sto:lo Nation susceptible to outages. Employees had to use ten-digit dialing just to speak to employees in one of the other buildings on site. Callers needing to be transferred to someone in another building were required to hang up and redial.

"The three different systems required us to handle internal calls the same as we did external calls," says Tara Green, administrative assistant at Sto:lo Nation. "As a result, internal calls were taking up channels on our PRIs, which significantly increased our total cost of ownership."

The legacy solutions also created a number of legal liabilities for the Sto:lo Nation. Official outbound calls had no caller ID; and, when an employee placed a 911 call, the receptionist was unable to direct first responders to the appropriate building location, posing a significant concern for public safety.

The Sto:lo Nation needed a communications system that would decrease its exposure to financial and legal risks, and improve its service to the public.

CUSTOMER

- Sto:lo Nation

INDUSTRY

- Government

CHALLENGES

- Three disparate solutions on a single site
- Inefficient and unreliable configuration
- Reduced service quality to public
- High total cost of ownership

SOLUTION

- Communication server: UNIVERGE® SV8300
- Unified messaging: UM8000
- System management: MA4000
- Connection: SV8300 Series Remote Link via IP network
- Terminals: NEC 12-button IP telephones
- IT infrastructure: HP ProCurve Network
- NEC Dealer: North American Telecommunications Group (Vancouver, BC)

RESULTS

- Savings on primary rate interface (PRI) line fees
- Lower cost of management with browser-based solution
- Improved productivity with four-digit dialing
- Enhanced productivity with direct inbound dialing (DID)
- Improved legal status with Caller ID
- Better safety for those placing 911 calls
- Business continuity in case of power loss

SOLUTION

In the summer of 2008, Green called Kevin and David Harman at the North American Telecommunications Group (NATG) in nearby Vancouver. Within two weeks, the NEC associate came back with a solid communications solution that addressed the Sto:lo Nation's communications, budgetary and support needs. "NATG were accommodating and responsive," says Green. "They identified our needs and listened to what we needed. In a few weeks, they returned with a practical, affordable plan."

"Right off we noticed the convenience and time-savings we gained when all 250 employees were making internal calls with just four digits," says Green.

NATG began installing the Sto:lo Nation's UNIVERGE solution in November 2008 and completed the install by early December. NATG used a SV8300 IP communications server to replace the three stand-alone systems. They installed uninterruptable power supplies, giving most of the solution up to four hours of backup. They also used the SV8300 Remote Link connections to connect nodes in each of the three buildings, creating a single, unified network.

The Sto:lo Nation's UNIVERGE solution allows all users four-digit internal dialing and the ability to transfer incoming calls. "Right off we noticed the convenience and time-savings we gained when all 250 employees were making internal calls with just four digits," says Green. "And now we can transfer incoming calls to whomever in the organization without having to ask callers to redial—far more convenient for them; as a result, we're giving better service to callers."

Harman says Sto:lo Nation's solution aligns well with the UNIVERGE360 framework in which the role of the user determines the best communications method and technology. For example, an administrator in the community development department interacts on a regular basis with the finance department within another building. With the UNIVERGE solution, she can now see when someone in another building is off the phone before walking to the adjacent building. "While it only takes someone ten minutes to walk between buildings, when multiplied by about 250 employees, being able to know who is on the phone in the other buildings can save everyone considerable time," says Harman.

The solution's Caller ID functionality allows employees to know who is calling from the outside, and they can decide whether to take the call or let it go to voicemail. "When our Government House employees place official calls, they are identified as coming from The Government House," Green adds. "That is important to us for legal reasons."

The UNIVERGE solution also improves public safety. Now when someone dials 911, the SV8300 automatically informs the receptionist of the originating extension. She can then use the reverse telephone directory to pinpoint the location and assist first responders when they arrive.

RESULTS

As a result of implementing the UNIVERGE solution, the Sto:lo Nation has been able to reduce external calling by 75 percent, which drastically reduces costs. "Because we no longer use our PRIs for internal calls, we no longer need as many, and will be saving on monthly fees," says Garrett MacAskill, Sto:lo Nation's IT Department manger.

Sto:lo Nation anticipates further cost savings upon implementing their MA4000. "When we implement our MA4000 management system, we will be able to ease maintenance even more with its very user friendly browser-based interface," adds MacAskill. "I estimate the new system will pay for itself within a year or two."

Both Green and MacAskill attribute the success of the Sto:lo Nation's implementation NATG's expertise. "Kevin and David Harman and the rest of the NATG team are technically very proficient and proactive," says MacAskill. "I'd give their service delivery a ten-rating."

"They've been very accommodating and explained it in plain language so we non-technical types could understand," adds Green. "They worked in the timeframe promised or more quickly. They were very 'go-to,' and they stayed until the job was done."

What's next for Sto:lo Nation? Implementation of the UM8000-Mail Solution, which is the in-skin, unified messaging solution for the SV8000 series communications servers. "Unified messaging will save everyone even more time by unifying voice, fax and e-mail messages in a single inbox," says MacAskill.

As Sto:lo Nation's communication needs continue to evolve; its UNIVERGE solutions will continue to unify the tribal government's communications.

[Read more about the UNIVERGE SV8300.](#)

[Contact NEC to find out more.](#)