



Industry: Government

Installation: 10 locations, 15 ShoreGear voice switches, 460+ ShorePhone IP phones

Date of Install: Started in March 2003, completed in phases over 3 years



SIoux FALLS SWITCHES TO VOIP FOR SAVINGS AND RESPONSIVENESS IMPROVEMENTS

Outdated Fujitsu PBX System Replaced with ShoreTel

The City of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, was “born” when land speculators arrived to claim a townsite in the fall of 1856. Those claiming the site left for the winter and returned in the spring of 1857 to establish a more permanent, year-round settlement. The City, which is the largest in the state by far, is a regional trade, distribution, and health care center.

THE CITY NEEDS A POWERFUL TELEPHONE SYSTEM

In 2003, Sioux Falls had a Fujitsu 9600 PBX phone system that it was quickly outgrowing, had limited functionality, and proved to be too costly to upgrade. The City decided it was time to evaluate a replacement and decided to start looking at Voice over IP (VoIP) solutions.

“We wanted to go with a system that wasn’t limited by copper on our campus,” said Ed Castle, IT Manager with the City of Sioux Falls. “We also wanted a system that would provide integrated and centralized voice mail so that everyone in every office would be on the same system. We decided to look at VoIP systems from Cisco, InterTel, Nortel and ShoreTel.”

The City wanted to initiate a pilot project within the information technology (IT) division, with 20 phones there and 20 phones at remote sites. The purpose of the pilot project was to test performance and system features. Cisco, InterTel and Nortel all required a great deal of capital to get the pilot going, whereas ShoreTel worked very closely with IT and met the City’s budget for the evaluation. Once it was deployed, the choice became clear when the IT team saw its capabilities.

“We really liked the simplicity of the ShoreTel system, plus all of the features and functions,” said Monte Watembach, Network Administrator with Sioux Falls. “ShoreTel was also really easy to manage and integrate with Outlook. Once the pilot project was done, we knew ShoreTel was the way to go.”

THE CITY SWITCHES TO SHORETEL

Over the course of two years, ShoreTel provided Sioux Falls with a comprehensive VoIP system. Across its 10 Sioux Falls sites, which include buildings that house libraries, city hall, and other departments, the city deployed 10 ShoreGear-120/24 voice switches, three ShoreGear-40/8 voice switches, and two ShoreGear-T1 voice switches for redundancy. ShoreTel also provided over 460 ShorePhone IP Phones, including 530, 230 and 560 models.

Challenge:

Sioux Falls had a Fujitsu 9600 PBX phone system that it was quickly outgrowing, had limited functionality, and proved to be too costly to upgrade.

Solution:

After carefully considering VoIP systems from leading vendors, Sioux Falls chose ShoreTel for a complete solution, including voice switches and IP telephones.

Benefits:

- Rich feature set helps employees improve productivity and enhance customer satisfaction.
- Emergency calls to 911 provide crucial location information that helps emergency response personnel quickly and easily locate the caller.
- Integration with business applications helps the city accurately distribute toll costs to appropriate departments.
- The city, which handles over a million calls a year, saves \$30,000 a year in line charge costs with the ShoreTel system in place.
- Standardizing on a single feature-rich phone system enhances productivity and efficiency.



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Network Administrator,
City of Sioux Falls

PRODUCTIVITY IS BOOSTED FOR CITY WORKERS

With ShoreTel in place, city employees are now on the same phone and voice mail system, using 4-digit dialing to reach co-workers at any location and even dialing by name. ShoreWare Personal Call Manager, integrated directly with Microsoft Outlook, gives Sioux Falls employees the equivalent of a desktop PBX—a powerful, all-purpose tool for managing voice communications. With it, employees simply type in the first few letters of a coworker's name, and Call Manager finds the number and dials it automatically, regardless of where they are located. With Advanced Call Manager, the user can also see the status of the person they are calling so they know if they are available to answer before they place—or transfer—a call. The call recipient then sees the call coming in right on their computer, where caller ID is displayed and they simply click to pick up or send the call to voice mail. Furthermore, with ShoreTel's e-mail integration, employees can manage their e-mail and voice mail activity centrally and efficiently.

Personal Call Manager's friendly, graphical interface also provides easy access to sophisticated features, including on-the-fly conferencing and document sharing, and dynamic, online directories eliminate paper directories that are often outdated. Voice mail messages are stored in the industry-standard WAV Audio for Windows format, allowing users to play them on multimedia PCs, attach them to e-mail messages and forward them to the right people, or embed them in other documents as well as keep permanent records on file.

“The ShoreTel system is very intuitive for users,” said Watembach. “We did a training class for everyone before they got their new phones—a class that took only about an hour and a half. This did the job for most people and they were quickly using the sophisticated features without hesitation.”

ShoreTel also gives users various call handling modes so that employees have control over how their calls are handled. While a user is at his or her desk, calls will ring straight through. When in a meeting, calls go directly to voice mail. Call Manager allows employees to remain responsive to calls without being tied to their desks, and ShoreTel's Follow Me Find Me feature allows them to have calls track them down wherever they are—at their desk, on their cell phone, or at home if they choose. Follow Me Find Me is particularly helpful for employees to track down IT personnel since they often are away from their desks.

In addition to powerful Personal Call Manager, ShoreWare Operator Call Manager software provides the city's receptionists with key information and control, enabling a significantly higher level of personalized attention for callers. For example, before even answering an incoming call, a call-routing log displays the caller's experience within the system to the receptionist or operator. In addition, before transferring the caller any further, the call-transfer screen displays who is available and who is not, avoiding the possibility of sending callers to an extension that is busy, which is frustrating for callers. With the entire city at their fingertips as well as knowledge about the calling and called party, operators can transfer callers to extensions, cell phones or even home phones instantly. Most of the city's receptionists also use cordless headsets with the ShoreTel system, so they are no longer bound to their desks to carry out their responsibilities—this improves productivity because they can take on added responsibilities while answering the telephone.



“Operator Call Manager has essentially replaced the old bulletin board system we had that was used to indicate where people could be found,” said Deb Christofferson, Telecommunications Specialist with the city. “It’s a much more efficient and professional way to deal with incoming calls. And each receptionist can log out of a workgroup to transfer the responsibility to the next person while they’re on break.”

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION IS MADE AVAILABLE

With the ShoreTel system, if a city staff member dials 911, crucial information is passed on to the emergency center. With the old system, there was no way to know where the call was coming from. With ShoreTel, the emergency response team gets the exact location of the caller – down to the floor, department and actual phone. At the same time, if a city manager or director making a non-emergency call wants to block caller ID, it’s easy to do so.

The City of Sioux Falls has also integrated its Tapit EX Call Accounting Software from Trisys with the ShoreTel system, which allows the IT department to charge back T1 costs and bill individual departments for toll charges. ShoreTel call logs are exported into Tapit and stored in an Access database.

“Tapit was recommended by ShoreTel’s local reseller and it easily integrated with ShoreTel,” said Watembach. “This helps us track billing and budgets very closely.”

WORKGROUPS ENHANCE CUSTOMER SERVICE

The City is also utilizing ShoreTel’s Workgroups which enables it to consolidate specific inquiry calls to one number and calls are routed to the next available call center staff member. The City has specific Workgroups dedicated to such groups as the Building Services and Utility Billing, for example. Workgroups also provides basic reporting capabilities to help measure call volume and make work schedule changes as necessary. Each Workgroup can have its own phone number so that citizens calling in for a specific purpose get right through to that department. No two departments answer the phone the same way—with ShoreTel, it is easy to meet the needs of eleven different business entities within the city.

“With ShoreTel, we can easily make changes to each workgroup and rotate people responsible for answering the phones on any particular day,” said Christofferson. “This is helpful in keeping morale up because we can rotate responsibilities and provide appropriate relief.”

“We’ve seen immediate customer satisfaction improvements,” said Castle. “In 2005 alone, we handled over a million calls—including internal calls and outside calls. We handled this with just two T1 lines. We feel really good about being able to handle this volume of calls with such a high level of customer satisfaction. I hear positive comments about the ShoreTel phone system from everybody.”

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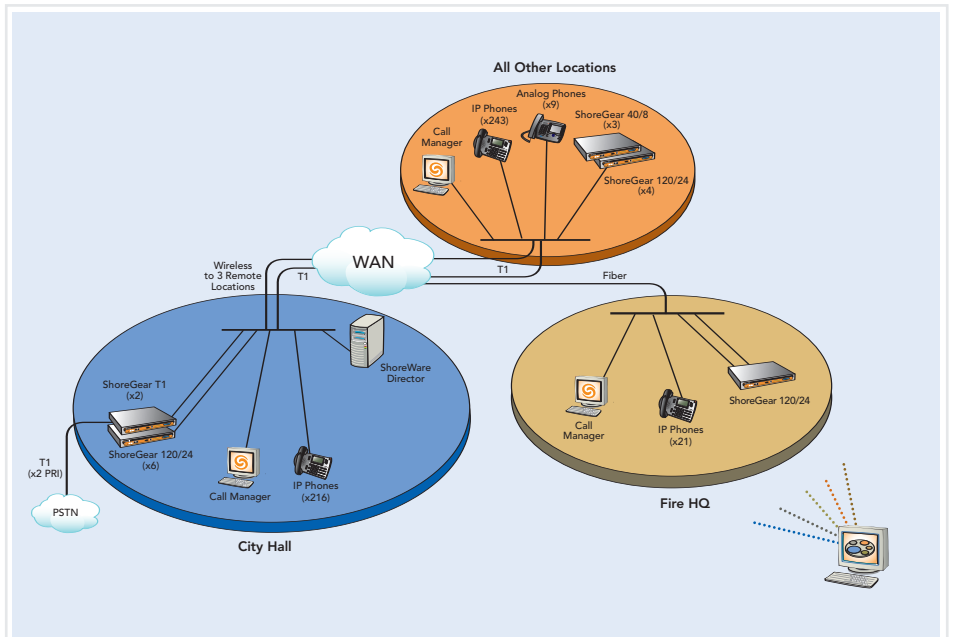
WIRELESS CONNECTIVITY ELIMINATES NEED FOR T1

The library in Sioux Falls utilizes a ShoreGear-40/8 switch connected to city hall by a point-to-point wireless connection using Proxim equipment. This allows the library to get much more bandwidth without the need for a dedicated T1.

“One of the greatest things with the ShoreTel system is that some of the remote sites are connected wirelessly and it just works,” said Castle. “Our goal is to continually increase bandwidth to the remote sites and eliminate monthly line charge costs. Even engineers using bandwidth-intensive GIS applications are noticing better performance over the wireless connection.”

“The bottom line is that with ShoreTel, we can do a lot more with the existing IT team. We’re able to handle everything in house and we don’t have to wait for anybody to make changes for us. We can just take care of things and move on to other projects. ShoreTel has made all of us more efficient, which is essential when an organization like ours needs to maximize time and budget.”

– Ed Castle
IT Manager,
City of Sioux Falls



Sioux Falls deployed ShoreTel to 14 locations with 480 phones.

CITY SEES OVERALL COST SAVINGS

Castle estimates that the city saved at least \$50,000 the first year the entire ShoreTel system was in place, due to the T1 charge savings and Centrex numbers that were eliminated. Ongoing savings are estimated at about \$30,000 per year in line charges.

In addition, the City uses ShoreWare Director, ShoreTel’s browser-based management interface, to access the system from anywhere on the network. Through this browser, every site and feature can be managed, including the voice mail, automated attendant and desktop applications. When a new user is added, an administrator simply clicks “add new” and enters the user’s name. Then, the centralized database and voice switches are automatically updated, and for the user, a new mailbox is created and the automated attendant dial-by-name and number feature and online directories are updated—all in a matter of seconds.



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With ShoreWare Director, the City of Sioux Falls saves significant time and money on employee moves, adds, and changes. With the previous solution, the City had to wait for—and pay—its service provider to complete these tasks.

“It’s easy to make changes to the ShoreTel system—from moves, adds, and changes to making workgroup configuration changes,” said Watembach. “It’s even easy for staff members that don’t have a phone background because it’s just like making network changes. We didn’t need to hire phone specialists – we’re able to leverage the backgrounds of our existing IT people.”

THE BOTTOM LINE

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