



## Serving the Public through Seamless Communication

### CLIENT CHALLENGES

- Replace multiple communications systems with a single, city-wide telephony system
- IP and digital phones
- Advanced messaging
- Centralized call center for municipal operations
- Scalability for future city growth
- Open architecture for future technology applications

### BACKGROUND

Even though it is Broward County's eighth largest city, the City of Plantation maintains a unique identity that combines urban and "hometown" amenities. The city's location at the center of Broward County in Southeast Florida has made it a magnet for businesses and new residents, but what keeps its 85,000 residents singing its praises is the extraordinary menu of Plantation's public services and facilities. Stretching through the City's 22.8 square miles are 44 parks and playgrounds, six golf courses, ten K-12 public schools, an aquatic center, community centers, libraries and multi-purpose facilities for dancing, senior activities and tennis lessons. Responsibility for making it all work is shouldered by the municipal government, Police Department, EMS and emergency operations personnel and volunteer fire department.

### THE CHALLENGE

As the city's population and public facilities expanded, so did the need for a communications system that served all of Plantation's stakeholders: residents, facility managers, department personnel, mobile employees, rapid responders, administrators and public officials. What Plantation needed was one communications system for the entire city – not the patchwork quilt of separate systems that had developed over years.

The City of Plantation set a high goal: create a seamless communication system that serves every department, facility and service center in the city. "It was an ambitious goal," admitted Robert Castro, Plantation's IT Director. "Virtually every department had its own telephone system and there was really no connection between them. Every department was its own little island. Callers couldn't be easily directed to different departments and service was suffering. While we struggled with growing service demands and a past-its-prime phone system, technology had made huge leaps in functionality and affordability. It was time for us to use those advanced capabilities."

Because the system would connect all departments – including police, fire and emergency operations – it required high reliability and redundancy. In addition, the City's commitment to customer service and efficiency added the requirement for advanced functionality. Finally, it had to be scalable and flexible. The City of Plantation had already grown quickly and municipal officials insisted that the new communications system enable cost-effective and efficient expansion when it was needed.

### THE CONSULTEGE SOLUTION

Avaya's S8700 Media Server enables the intelligent communication needed by the City of Plantation to meet its need for flexibility, power and reliability. The S8700 is a robust server capable of handling thousands of end points and heavy call volume. Built-in redundancy and local survivable processors (LSPs) ensure high reliability, especially for mission-critical functions like police protection and emergency preparedness. The server relies on Avaya's Communications Manager (CM). CM supports most industry-standard application programming interfaces and enables the City to add technologies as they are needed in the future. CM supports both IP and switched telephone networks with service for its entire phone system assured by an underground metro Ethernet ring that surrounds the city. The ring will support service expansion as the City continues to grow, but it also enables continuity of the system even during hurricanes or storms that often disrupt traditional, above-ground phone service. "We aren't worried about going through another experience like Hurricane Wilma, when telephone poles were snapped and phone service disappeared. We know that our system will stay up and running, even in emergencies," said Castro.

The City's new telephony system provides benefits in cost-control as well as service reliability. Instead of relying on its carrier to perform adds/moves/changes, the Avaya system's built-in functionality gives Plantation's in-house IT professionals the resources to make adjustments and minor upgrades. Protection of the equipment is assured 24 hours a day, 365 days a year under a two-year maintenance contract. While Avaya covers equipment integrity through its fix/repair capabilities, Consultedge remains an ongoing partner to the City by providing both technical and performance services. In early 2009, Consultedge conducted voicemail training for City personnel. "Every public facility in the City is linked in a single system that operates efficiently and dependably. The system's functionality means that we're able to provide our residents and visitors with the best possible customer experience. At the same time, we've increased the efficiency and reduced the costs of providing services and conducting City business," said Castro. "We don't anticipate any problems with the equipment or performance but sometimes the unexpected happens. With Consultedge and Avaya as our partners, we're not worried about the unexpected."

