

3-D CAD and VPN Map the Way to the Future Fire Protection Company Keeps Its Cool with Help from MLANS

Hampshire Fire Protection of Londonderry is the state's largest commercial fire protection company, offering sprinkler system design, installation, inspection, and 24/7/365 service; fire extinguisher and restaurant fire suppression systems sales, inspection, and service; and fire alarm system sales and service.

A referral led this family-owned business to MLA Network Services in May, 2009. Owner Larry Thibodeau recalled, "When we called our past support person, it would take two or three days to get a reply."

No More Waiting

Administrator Martha Rodriguez is now delighted that with MLANS she gets a ten minute response to her email messages. She no longer has to wait for after-hours repairs. In fact, many repairs are done remotely.

Larry said that now systems maintenance is stated it is upping productivity and efficiency. "A problem, it is usually resolved before we know it. One day evening I got an email that there had been a problem, it was resolved. If we hadn't had that service, we would have come in Monday to a minor disaster. The support person didn't even know it occurred.

"It was initially more expensive for us. But we aren't losing any data. We're not losing time when equipment is down. In the long run we're going to save a lot of money."

Improvements Yield Productivity, Efficiency

The old backup and virus scan started, but never finished, during lunchtime, tying up the employees' PCs in the afternoon. MLANS installed Peace of Mind Backup, which is invisible to the employees, and mirrors it at night to a second nearby office which is connected by fiber.

Larry said, "I sleep better at night with our new backup system. Before MLANS, we had an archaic tape system. We had to change the tapes every couple of days or every night. If somebody didn't change the tape, we didn't have a backup. That's just one other thing we don't have to worry about now."

The old, home-built server was up front collecting dust and dirt. Mark Aronson upgraded both servers and moved them to a cleaner space. "We weren't working with a stable operating system, but we didn't know that at the time. When MLANS came in we changed the whole platform," Larry said.

Their email had been malfunctioning with part on Exchange and part on Google, but is now entirely on Exchange, with an anti-spam solution.

Quotes now go out electronically instead of by fax or mail. Invoices are prompt. Plans go to fire departments quickly, speeding the permit process. Ending downtime assures there is no lost time in design or accounting.

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MLANS' 3-D CAD systems display the building and all the piping in a 3-D model, preventing problems at the construction site. Customers now receive 3-D designs electronically, speeding the design and approval process.

Mark Aronson worked closely with HP to come up with an workstation design. Each new workstation is faster

and more stable. Hampshire is taking a long-term approach to upgrading office systems, many with dual monitors, 30" monitors, and 30" monitors. A SonicWall firewall and Vipre anti-virus software reduced the number of infections. A new switch made the network more stable.

Employees in remote offices now connect through a VPN, copying stored data at the end of the day. The data is backed up on the server. Before, if something happened to their computer, they would lose everything. The remote people are able to work and share documents much more easily.

Mark enjoys working with the people at Hampshire Fire Protection. "I've definitely made a difference for them. They ask if they can do things and I tell them how or I make it happen. They're a nice group of people and it is fun to work with them. It's a very different environment, with both sophisticated CAD systems and a shop where they build everything," Mark said.

"We are happy with your service and we look forward to continued business and a good business relationship," Larry said.



Larry Thibodeau