

Brethren Retirement Community

The Problem. Brethren Retirement Community wanted to modernize their communications systems to prepare for the future needs of residents and staff.

Brethren Retirement Community wanted to maximize the performance of their communication systems, including telephones, paging, intercom, internet, data systems, and wireless radios to provide a more productive, efficient and dependable living and working environment. They hoped to offer residents and staff enhanced services such as cable/satellite television, internet, and telecommunications. Brethren also wanted to reduce manpower through better use of technology, network their two campuses, consolidate billing, and minimize extraordinary operating expenditures.

However, Brethren Retirement Community's equipment had been problematic. Their phone system was over 20 years old, and their voicemail system was 13 years old. The current systems were outdated, and expensive and time-consuming to maintain. Redundant voice and data systems existed to accomplish the same tasks. Problems included background noise, static, "ring back," frequent unavailability of outside lines, and delays as long as 24-48 hours to receive voicemails.

The Solution. DigiTel made recommendations that enhanced the short and long-term business goals of Brethren. Their desire to provide new and enhanced services to residents, and wireless applications to a very mobile employee group was growing. Brethren needed a solution that would lead to more efficient employee systems, better resident care, and a more hospitable environment for residents. The only way to achieve the organization's goals was to merge the available technology for voice and data into an integrated solution.

Following DigiTel's recommendations, Brethren Retirement Community replaced the data infrastructure using a fiber-optic backbone improving speed 100 times. They installed a wireless network throughout the campus for phones and laptops. Brethren Retirement Community provided 24/7 power reliability using a generator for the entire voice and data network. Their professional implementation strategy used Cisco professional services, converging LAN, WAN, voice and data services using Cisco AVVID solutions.

They were able to introduce four new resident services, generating revenue and promoting a more hospitable environment. Installation of new network carrier services captured a reduced annual cost of \$125,000. They improved the overall quality of service using new IP technology, and established a modular and scalable design capable of adding a new Mill Ridge Village campus.

Key Benefits to Brethren Retirement Community

- Reduced carrier expenses by over \$125,000 annually.
- Created new service offerings to residents including enhanced phone services, internet, email, and concierge services.
- Projected new revenue of \$20,000+ annually.
- Improved employee productivity by over 2%.
- Reduced FTEs by 3.
- Developed a long-term strategy for their voice and data communications network.