Success Story

Baltimore Inner Harbor Public WiFi

Introduction

The Inner Harbor of Baltimore has long been a draw for both tourists and local citizens. With shops, restaurants, ferries and more this locale has long been a major attraction. In an effort to support this vibrant area, the City of Baltimore launched a project to bring free public WiFi to the Inner Harbor.

The City of Baltimore approached Port Networks, a local System Integrator, to provide a WiFi network that would provide both tourists and locals frequenting the Inner Harbor with easy access to the Internet. Included in this network was backhaul for the Access Points.

Challenges

The City of Baltimore owns and operates a fiber backbone, but the fiber doesn't reach every WiFi access point in the harbor. Disrupting daily tourist activities to lay more fiber was neither feasible nor economical.

There were two primary requirements for the wireless backhaul solution. The first was a low profile or footprint that would be unobtrusive in the historic setting.   In addition, the solution had to support gigabit speeds to support the WiFi traffic peaks expected during holiday weekends and over the summer.

The Solution　Port Networks quickly settled on mmWave as the optimal spectrum for the backhaul connectivity that could provide the capacity needed. The search for a mmWave radio that was unobtrusive led to the Siklu EtherHaul-600T.   "The EtherHaul is literally palm-sized; it was the smallest radio we could find that operated in the 60GHz spectrum," said Carl Peterson, Network Manager of Port Networks. The EtherHaul-600T provides Gigabit throughput that can handle peak WiFi performance. Units can be installed in close proximity if needed to Aps and each other.

Port Networks installed the entire WiFi network, including the backhaul, themselves. "Installing the EtherHaul-600 was very easy," said Peterson. "Its small size and light weight make the physical installation dead simple, and aligning the link was surprisingly uncomplicated and fast."

Results　The network performance has been flawless since installation. "We're confident our EtherHaul backhaul will be able to handle anything Baltimore's WiFi network can throw at it," says Ilan Moshe, head of Siklu's Business Development team. "The EtherHaul-600 has proven performance under peak WiFi conditions, even when the upload rate greatly exceeds the download rate."

Port Networks is so pleased with the EtherHaul-600T performance that it is planning to incorporate additional Siklu radios in other WiFi backhaul networks. "Adding Siklu radios will allow us to easily boost our network capacity," explains Peterson.