



Facilities Leader Becomes Mobility Model

Spokane Public Facilities District creates 802.11n environment, improves guest experience, and increases competitive edge.

Customer Name: **Spokane Public Facilities District**
Industry: **Sports and entertainment**
Location: **Spokane, WA, United States**
Company Size: **40 employees**

Case Study

Business Impact

Benefits delivered by the Cisco® Unified Wireless Network include:

- Extended mobility services to growing number of users and devices
- Increased wireless coverage for high-client-density environments
- Improved quality of services and strengthened competitive position
- Optimized resources and lowered total cost of network ownership



Business Challenge

The Spokane Public Facilities District (SPFD) operates three of the leading public assembly facilities in the state of Washington. Chosen twice in four years to host the U.S. Figure Skating Championships, the Spokane Veterans Memorial Arena is also home to premier events such as the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) basketball tournaments.

To provide reliable Wi-Fi coverage to its arena, performing arts, and convention centers, the SPFD ran a Cisco Unified Wireless Network with a/b/g access points. In 2009, the SPFD decided to extend high-speed mobility to all convention center attendees. But with convention groups as large as 2000 visitors requiring concentrated Wi-Fi usage in certain areas of the facility, SPFD needed a solution to support its high-density, high-client-volume environment.

Solution and Results

SPFD evaluated competitive wireless solutions, but chose Cisco 802.11n technology to conduct a rigorous pilot test in the Spokane Arena during the 2010 U.S. Figure Skating Championships. "We had the confidence in Cisco to conduct the pilot during such a high-profile event," says Ryan Wilson, SPFD's network manager.

"The Cisco support team was impressive, and the 802.11n access points provided the speed, reliability, and density capabilities we needed."

The network supported 200 international media and 50 championship officials in a dedicated media room during the event. Consistent wireless coverage enabled sportscasters and reporters to transmit photos, post blog updates, and send articles in real time. According to Philip Hersch, who covered the event for the *Chicago Tribune*, "[SPFD] set up the most reliable wireless network I have ever seen at a big event."

SPFD is now in the process of completing deployment of 85 access points throughout its three facilities. "We were able to leverage our existing investment in the Cisco Unified Wireless Network to upgrade to 802.11n," says Wilson. "The ability to grow the network to meet our evolving needs, including support for future mobility services such as video, lowers our total cost of ownership." The new access points have already increased mobility and productivity for SPFD workers, providing wireless access and voice over Wi-Fi to SPFD staff, wireless point of service for food and beverage carts, and ticket scanning using wireless handheld devices.

Part of the Cisco Borderless Network Architecture, the Cisco Unified Wireless Network streamlines operations and provides a competitive edge for SPFD. The network enables SPFD to quickly and easily create custom wired and wireless configurations for different trade shows. "With one network manager in charge of 500 events per year, the ease of management of the Cisco Unified Wireless Network makes it possible for us to provide the highest level of service, compete effectively against other cities, and attract more business, despite limited resources," says Wilson.

"The Cisco Unified Wireless Network enables us to meet and exceed the rigorous requirements for mobility services that our sporting organization clients and convention center attendees expect."

— Ryan Wilson, network manager, Spokane Public Facilities District

For more information on the Cisco Unified Wireless Network and 802.11n technology, visit: <http://www.cisco.com/go/wireless>

To find out more about the Spokane Public Facilities District, visit: <http://www.spokanepfd.org/>.