

CASE STUDY

Fighting Through Wildfires with Jive



Reserve Independent Schools is a district headquartered in Reserve, New Mexico. Situated in the Gila National Forest on the Arizona/New Mexico border, it is the county seat of Catron County, the state’s largest and least densely populated county. The area includes ruins from the Mogollon and Anasazi tribes, as well as petroglyphs and historic Old West sites.



At a Glance

Reserve Independent Schools, Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Response Reserve, New Mexico

State and Federal Emergency Response Agencies needed immediate access to communications technology. Jive Hosted VoIP installed at a high school was appropriated for emergency use by the Dept. of Homeland Security.

2011 was an exceptionally devastating year for wildfires in the United States, with major blazes effecting Arizona, Texas, and New Mexico. Few areas faced as large of a wildfire threat as the western United States, which has an abundance of burnable brush, trees, and undergrowth in an area with little rainfall. Drought conditions plagued much of the South West region, where over 8 million acres burned. With millions in property, lives and livelihoods at stake, government agencies used all the technology and tools at their disposal to contain these disasters.

THE WALLOW FIRE

In late May 2011 a giant wildfire, known as the Wallow Fire, raced across eastern Arizona, forcing the evacuation of thousands of residents and hopping the border into New Mexico.

The Wallow fire was one of the largest wildfires to date ever to threaten Arizona. The fire sent plumes of smoke over a vast area and tied up traffic, closing many highways. Dry weather and fierce winds caused the fire to spread quickly, frustrating the more than 4,000 firefighters assigned to the blaze.

The high school in Reserve, New Mexico, was set up as an emergency shelter for evacuees and a base of operations for the Department of Homeland Security during the disaster. The high school, a Jive Hosted VoIP client, was well positioned to help authorities fight the blaze.

Chad Fuller, the IT Coordinator for Reserve Independent Schools was heavily involved in the effort.

“Our facilities were very close to the action. Our high school was chosen to be the home base for the Type-1 Emergency Response Team made up of both state and federal agencies,” said Chad.

Paul Lord, a Communications Officer for the Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Response, was one of the officials leading the team in Reserve.

“Due to natural disasters . . . there has been a growing need for public safety agencies to intercommunicate across jurisdictions and disciplines, as well as with the state’s emergency coordinating agency,” said Paul. “For this emergency, we needed the ability to communicate quickly with the teams and individuals involved in containing the fire.”

Tackling a fire the size of the Wallow requires a solid strategy, advanced technology, coordinated administrators, and courageous firefighters willing to do battle with the blaze and the elements fueling it.

“Communications interoperability underpins the ability of federal, state, local, and tribal entities to work together effectively to prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from major disasters, and other emergencies”



JIVE GETS IN ON THE ACTION

The Department of Homeland Security needed to quickly appropriate Reserve's Hosted VoIP system for emergency use.

Chad, along with several students and the help of Jive's support team, was able to re-provision its IP phones and provide the Department of Homeland Security with a fully operational, customized phone system in less than three hours.

"My students and I were able to provide the team with everything they needed with respect to both communications and technology," said Chad. "I was commended by the National Defense Agency and received a personal thank you from NM Governor Suzana Martinez."

Chad acknowledged Jive's participation and service in the emergency situation in an official letter from Reserve Independent Schools.

"I could not have done this without your team," wrote Chad. "Your quality of service and willingness to help, even in off-hours, was outstanding. In a very tough time for many in our community, you came through with a level of customer service that was above and beyond."

The Wallow Fire, which consumed over a half million acres and required over 4,000 personnel, was the largest fire in Arizona history. Jive is proud to have been a part of the team fighting to protect property and save lives.