



Westchester's Intelligent Network at Work

In 1998, when Andy Spano became County Executive, Westchester County had a vision to transform itself into a world-class, 21st century business environment through the creation of a state of the art telecommunications infrastructure that would provide high-speed, high-capacity communications services to governments and businesses throughout the county and provide the foundation for economic growth.

In March 2000, the County teamed up with Optimum Lightpath to bring that vision to life with the launch of the Westchester Telecom Network: a high-capacity, fiber optic communications network that provides advanced data, Internet, voice, video transport solutions and managed services to municipalities, schools, libraries, healthcare institutions, and businesses in the County -- enabling them to communicate and share information faster, more reliably and more simply than ever before.

Today, the Westchester Telecom Network is considered to be one of the most robust and sophisticated telecommunications networks in the world, spanning 56,982 fiber miles and delivering on its promise to maximize accessibility to government services, improve telecommunications reliability and transmission quality, reduce overall telecom costs, and boost economic development efforts in the County.

The Westchester Telecom Network provides services to nearly 60 percent of the municipalities located within the County, including nearly 225 government buildings and more than 200 commercial buildings as well as schools, libraries, healthcare institutions and public safety organizations. Currently, the network has the ability to reach more than 75 percent of the more than 30,000 companies -- of all sizes -- that operate in Westchester County. The municipalities are now able to conduct business more efficiently, as well as attract companies to their area and generate new business.

To date, results include:

- Quadrupling bandwidth for the County's state-of-the-art Emergency Operations Center, Transportation Management Center, and back-up data center;
- Enabling real-time telemedicine consultations between Westchester Medical Center and inmates in the Westchester County Jail, which has cut inmate visits to the emergency room by more than 50 percent and increased public safety;
- Synchronizing traffic lights throughout the County in order to improve traffic flow, and
- Enabling schools to utilize cutting-edge technology teaching and learning tools enhance learning, and engage and excite students, teachers, parents and the community in ways that would not be possible without the capacity, scalability and cost-savings enabled through this technology.

The network has saved the County and its residents millions of dollars in communications costs, while encouraging new business development and investment in the region. Redeploying these savings back into the network further allows the county to provide value-added services to benefit residents and businesses.

Westchester County has recently been named one of the Top Seven Intelligent Communities of the Year by The Intelligent Community Forum (ICF), a non-profit international think tank that focuses on job creation and economic development in the broadband economy. The designation recognizes Westchester for its economic development efforts in the 21st century and puts the county in the company of other progressive communities. Gaining a place among the top seven is a major achievement toward greater recognition for Westchester's efforts to use broadband and information technology to attract leading edge businesses, stimulate job creation and generate sustainable economic growth.

"When I came up with the idea of creating a broadband network in Westchester, my goal was to make the county into a world-class business destination," said County Executive Andy Spano. "Not only has it helped us get more business to locate here, but it has also exponentially improved the quality of life for Westchester residents, providing better and more accessible education, healthcare and government services."