Regional Fiber Network Case Study

Through the Upper Midwest carrier hotel's extensive network density, Great Plains Communications meets unbridled demand for connectivity into an edge market

Great Plains Communications (GPC) is the largest independent telecommunications, last mile and middle mile provider in Nebraska with more than 5,000 miles of fiber spanning multiple states. With a 105-year track record, the family-owned company employs 220 to serve almost 100 communities with telephone, digital cable, broadband and high-speed data technology service.

GPC maintains an ongoing, forward-thinking effort to expand its network, identifying areas of growth across the Midwest and Western U.S. and moving on them quickly. As part of this push, the company identified new demand from customers seeking connectivity into Minnesota. GPC targeted Minneapolis as a centralized point to expand its footprint into the state, directing its focus on Cologix's newest downtown data center to deploy a network extension node.



"Across our markets, we saw new demand from customers seeking connectivity into Minnesota, including both carrier and enterprise clients. Our clients want **low latency and high bandwidth connections** into the Upper Midwest, and our presence with Cologix in Minnesota helps fill that need to give us **good reach throughout the state**."

– Lynn Mead, GPC Head of Carrier and Wholesale Services

Requirements & Challenges

- Centralized point to expand GPC's footprint into Minnesota
- Carrier hotel data center to quickly & easily connect to other networks with 100% uptime
- Low latency & high-bandwidth connectivity, including fiber access
- Proficient data center technical support staff & timely service responsiveness
- 24/7 data center access
- High security environment

Solution

- ✓ Manageable network extension via Cologix's state-of-the-art, MIN 3 data center in downtown Minneapolis
- ✓ Direct interconnection access to 75+ unique networks available in the Meet-Me-Room
- ✓ Cologix's Remote Hands service for technical support that extends GPC's remote capabilities
- ✓ 24/7 security, closed-circuit TV, & tailgate-proof mantrap with card & biometric entry

"Cologix has a consistent approach that makes it easier for us to communicate with our customers in the best way possible. The important thing is that the carrier hotel technical support understands how to meet our needs. There are some carrier hotels that struggle with the basics, so we always look for a provider that knows how to help us, and how we can help them. Cologix's Minneapolis facility is designed very well and the staff accommodates customers by ensuring the framework to extend fiber is in place."

– Lynn Mead, GPC Head of Carrier and Wholesale Services

Results

By setting up a network extension node with Cologix in the 511 Building, the most connected carrier hotel in the Upper Midwest, GPC gains:

Copious Connectivity

The thing about carrier hotels is that they allow GPC to quickly and easily connect to a number of other carriers. In fact, through Cologix's MIN 3 data center Meet-Me-Room, GPC is able to optimize its network by directly connecting to up to 75+ unique carriers. A Minneapolis point of presence (POP) enables GPC to hand traffic off to other carriers, and receive traffic from those networks to enable a collaboration of network, or central meeting point. Most importantly, through these carrier relationships, GPC is able to extend its network reach into Minnesota to provide services in the state. GPC's carrier customers want low latency and high bandwidth connections into Minnesota and the company's presence with Cologix Minneapolis delivers.

A Stay in the Upper Midwest's Carrier Hotel

GPC requires close proximity to Minnesota's carriers and regional providers, the vast majority of which are available in the 511 Building. Nonetheless, the important thing to GPC's engineers is that the technical staff understands how to meet the company's needs. Some carrier hotels GPC has worked with struggle with the basics. When ordering a circuit connection, GPC doesn't want to explain how it should be provisioned. With Cologix, GPC found a sophisticated colocation provider that knows how to help, and how GPC can help the ecosystem within Cologix's data center. Additionally, the company discovered Cologix accommodates customers by ensuring the infrastructure is in place to extend fiber based on customers' needs.

Minnesota's Newest Interconnection Center

GPC finds the MIN 3 data center, Cologix's newest data center in downtown Minneapolis, features a very well planned, technology-forward design. Cologix's cutting-edge infrastructure facilitates concurrent maintainability so customers like GPC can rest easy based on the reliability and stability of their IT deployments.

Proven Service Reputation

GPC knew of Cologix's favorable reputation for several years, but gained a first-hand, positive experience through its deployment. GPC's engineers are quite pleased with the ease of doing business and prompt response times, which were key factors in the company's colocation decision. Further, Cologix's business development team introduced GPC to the process, sharing the advantages and understanding what GPC wanted to accomplish at the end of the day. Finally, Cologix's network neutral approach to colocation makes it easier for GPC to do business because the data center provider isn't the one trying to broker deals between vendors – Cologix just enables access to a wide ecosystem so GPC can build business.

Connecting 5,000 Miles of Fiber

Data centers are integral to GPC's business. Using Minneapolis as an extension node, the company lengthens its network from Nebraska, through South Dakota, and into Minnesota to connect to other carriers for regional, national and international connectivity while gaining upstream IP bandwidth. The company leverages this carrier connectivity to continue extending GPC's network across the nation for customers to reach new markets, provide services across multiple states, and offer capacity to carriers. The Minneapolis POP enables the company to deliver a complete solution for businesses as well as multi-site or multi-state customers. Additionally, Cologix Minneapolis customers benefit as they can now take advantage of this reach by interconnecting to GPC through Cologix's Meet-Me-Room.

Great Plains Communications Fiber Map

