



Alberta municipal district and town find technology solutions and support with CDW Canada

Submitted by CDW Canada

Cutting costs is a concern for all organizations but for municipalities, which must spend resident's tax dollars responsibly, it is even more so. As well, IT departments are often stretched for time, so sourcing the right technology solutions quickly and at the right price is often a challenge.

The Town of High River, Alberta (a community just south of Calgary) sits in the Municipal District of Foothills. The town and municipal district offices share a building as well as network infrastructure and services including email, Internet access and servers.

By 2008 both were dealing with outdated and antiquated technology, so a technology refresh

was required. New hardware was top of mind, as neither the town nor the district had purchased new equipment in approximately four years. According to Kent Blair, the IT manager for the Town of High River and Municipal District of Foothills, the new hardware was imperative as a new application was being launched in 2009 and the upgrade was needed to support the advanced requirements for notebook and desktop computing.

With the municipal building and 14 other remote locations throughout Foothills connected by a wide area network, a total of 225 users needed to be supported. The equipment requirements had already been determined and included 225 personal computers with a mix of notebooks and

workstations, six servers, two network-attached storage (NAS) devices, a NAS backup server as well as a backup tape library.

The municipalities had a regular supplier for their IT needs but Blair decided to do some comparison shopping, given the amount of products he was going to purchase. He reached out to his contacts and received three proposals for the equipment in which he was interested. Upon receiving the results, Blair found that one supplier stood out from the rest.

Blair determined that CDW Canada – through its relationships with more than 350 technology manufacturers, its volume purchasing and efficient business model – could provide the best technology for the MD of Foothills and High River while passing savings along to residents. In addition, Blair saw the benefit of having a dedicated CDW Canada account manager, who is in turn backed by a team of highly certified technology specialists trained in storage, security, networking and software licensing and more.

“Our CDW Canada account manager has been key to a lot of decisions by helping us with some outside-of-the-box solutions,” Blair said. “CDW Canada was able to offer competitive pricing and was willing to deliver to my door next day, saving time and simplifying the ordering process. By selecting CDW Canada, the Municipal District of Foothills and High River got more gear and value for our money. There was no question this made the most sense for us. It’s been a really good relationship.”

Because of the tremendous support and value Blair receives, CDW Canada has become the

technology provider of choice for the municipal district and High River.

Blair has also turned to CDW Canada for other implementations and purchases, including a wireless network project.

Blair needed to connect 11 offsite locations at broadband speeds, but there is no access to fibre in the town. Through an existing relationship that Blair had with a local third-party company, CDW Canada partnered to help create a wireless broadband solution to meet the town’s needs. The other firm offered the broadband component of the project, and CDW Canada coordinated with Cisco for the required hardware.

“With CDW Canada’s recommendations on Cisco infrastructure and networking gear, they came up with a solution that meets our budget and is also feasible, which was a big concern for us,” Blair explained. “We have a turn-key, private network that is going to address all of our internal data needs as well as provide the proper backbone for the complete IP telephony system we plan to rollout.”

Blair cites the level of customer service he has received as the most impressive and compelling benefit to working with CDW Canada, saying, “...my CDW Canada account manager has gone the extra mile, working with the vendors on my behalf to secure the best solutions and pricing – regardless of my purchasing volume. I needed to invest a substantial sum of taxpayer funds to upgrade our current infrastructure, and CDW Canada was willing and able to work with vendors to get the right equipment to meet our current and future needs – and meet budget targets while doing so.” 