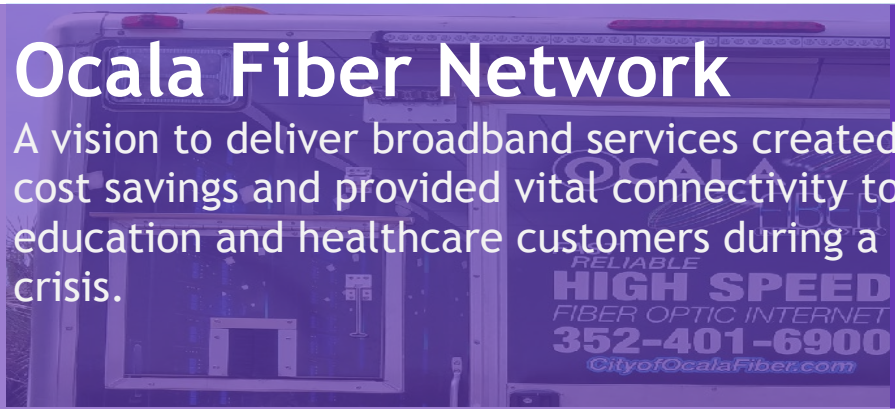
Ocala Fiber Network

A vision to deliver broadband services created cost savings and provided vital connectivity to education and healthcare customers during a crisis.



"The OmniSwitch switches are the part of the brain that makes us work. All our ALE switches are vital in all the connections and delivering services across our network. ALE provides a great piece of equipment. My engineers say they like the simplicity of it and most importantly, the support they get."

Mel Poole, Director of Ocala Fiber Network

Ocala Fiber Network in Florida evolved from the City of Ocala electric utility two decades ago. Its purpose: deliver a range of broadband Internet services based on the build-out of a 100 percent fiber network for city agencies as well as citizens. The network was modernized with Alcatel-Lucent Enterprise switches to deliver higher speeds with better network management and performance. And through a global health crisis, OFN proved its value to its customers.

CHALLENGES

In 1995, Ocala Fiber Network (OFN) expanded its electric utility fiber optic network to become an Internet Service Provider (ISP). With its 100 percent fiber-based backbone, from last mile to the home, OFN set out to provide Internet service to local businesses, schools, homes, hospitals, fire dept and libraries. 25 years later, OFN realized the need for a fresh network design to move away from loop back issues, assure better management, and deliver improved speeds and performance with guaranteed throughputs.

ACTION

Over the years, Ocala used Alcatel-Lucent Enterprise products for telephony communications and data networking. As the network service delivery business increased with city agencies and businesses, OFN added ALE products to expand delivery, management and reach greater service levels. Will Rios, Security Network Engineer at OFN shared, "ALE switches are 'set and forget,' and we trust them to help us deliver the evolution of OFN." The most recent ALE switch upgrade replaced ALE switches from 2004, proving long-lasting capabilities.

Additionally, today all city street traffic controllers and FDOT connections, smart meter grid, and way finding signs connect to the grid. ALE switches are vital to making those connections happen.

In 2019, OFN sat down with ALE to consider the benefits of Shortest Path Bridging (SPB) technology. SPB plans to move OFN into a more modern network design, one offering the best in efficiency and performance with expected cost savings. OFN has begun adding Alcatel-Lucent OmniSwitch 6865 hardened Ethernet switches for its transformation to SPB.

At the onset of the 2020 health crisis, OFN provided additional bandwidth for telemedicine, distance learning, and remote working, without delay.

PRODUCTS AND SOLUTIONS

Alcatel-Lucent OmniSwitch® 6900
Alcatel-Lucent OmniSwitch® 6865 add 6465
Alcatel-Lucent OmniSwitch® 6860
Alcatel-Lucent OmniPCX® Enterprise

RESULTS

Technical Benefits

- "Ease of deployment and managing ALE switches is second to none" ~Will Rios
- OmniSwitches deliver network link utilization with dynamic network configuration
- Increased speed of Service Activation and low maintenance of switches

Financial Benefits

- Modern network offers increase of revenue funds that go back to the city
- Switches are future-proof
- "Can't beat the cost effectiveness of the ALE switches – they optimize network capacity while being budget friendly" ~Will Rios
- SPB capabilities will improve routing for less TCO

User Experience Benefits

- Streamlined network gives OFN ability to deliver broader services and greater bandwidth to customers
- OmniSwitches give OFN the ability to increase usage seamlessly in times of crisis
- Network infrastructure team learned ALE switches 5-10 times faster than other vendor's switches

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Customer Story

MARKET: ENERGY/UTILITIES	**COUNTRY:** USA	**COMPANY:** OCALA FIBER NETWORK / CITY OF OCALA
DEAL IMPLEMENTED: FALL 2019	**NUMBER OF USERS:** >4000	