

A Municipality's Journey to Future-Ready

Cary, North Carolina partners with Cisco and NWN Carousel to put innovation to work



The customer summary

Customer name
Town of Cary

Industry
Municipality

Location
North Carolina

Number of employees
1000

Business challenge summary

- Meet and exceed citizen expectations of exceptional service.
- Hire and retain superior IT talent, while focusing on more strategic outcomes.
- Leverage technology to better prepare for potentially challenging events.

Network solution summary

- Deployed, managed, and monitored a broad range of communications, network, and security technologies

Business results summary

- Partnered with NWN Carousel and Cisco to leverage their experience, expertise, and offerings to build a smarter town
- Outsourced tactical functions, enabling IT staff to focus on strategic outcomes

Technology/ Application partner

The NWN Carousel Experience Management Platform (EMP) offers a unified view of an organization's entire cloud communications infrastructure, providing advanced analytics, custom reporting, access to a 24/7 customer success center, and proactive alerting. EMP enhances your ability to observe, operate, and optimize your environment to support successful digital transformation.

Channel/ Integrator partner

NWN Carousel (Cisco Gold Provider Partner)

“I see NWN Carousel and Cisco as extensions of our IT staff. I also see them as providing expertise that we don't have. We are not going to know everything about everything. There are experts at NWN and Cisco that can help us, because they also really understand our business, our needs, and our goals.”

Nicole Coughlin

CIO, The Town of Cary

Business challenge

The Town of Cary (Cary), North Carolina has a population of 175,000+ and is ranked number 150 (in size) in the United States. CIO Nicole Coughlin must deliver a diverse list of services—ranging from town-wide wireless connectivity to a round-the-clock contact center—with a limited IT budget and staff. These and similar challenges are common to most municipalities.

For one, recruiting and retaining IT talent, while training them with the skillsets needed to meet tomorrow's needs, can be difficult. On the one hand, many of the tasks required to manage and monitor the technology foundational to supporting the city can be relatively tactical, such as resourcing a service desk. On the other hand, there is an abundance of technology innovation available that can be leveraged to help continuously optimize the services Ms. Coughlin's IT team delivers to the town's citizens, such as deploying artificial intelligence to derive insights from data gathered from IoT devices. It can be quite challenging finding enough internal resources with the aligned expertise to do both.

Remote work offers another example of challenge. Like many businesses, the pandemic required Cary's IT staff to support town employees working from home. This mandate involved deploying security measures such as firewalls, virtual private networks, and tools to detect threats. And as city workers returned to the office, Cary's IT staff also had to support hybrid work, giving employees a similar experience regardless of where they worked.

To address these challenges, Ms. Coughlin turned to the NWN Carousel cloud communications portfolio. Solutions included device as a service (DaaS) to manage the town's PCs; unified communications and collaboration (UC&C) to upgrade its voice system and support conference rooms; and implementation and support of robust security.

NWN Carousel EMP gives Ms. Coughlin's team visibility into device patch compliance through real-time reporting. EMP provides detailed device analytics to monitor the health and performance of the PC fleet. In addition, service levels for the NWN Carousel Customer Success Center Service Desk and case trends dashboard allow Cary to co-manage cases in ServiceNow. EMP also provides visibility into remote hardware support and user provisioning requests, Microsoft Intune and Office 365 alerts and notifications, end-user IT support services.

Network solution

NWN Carousel is a fully integrated cloud communications service provider (CCSP) headquartered in Rhode Island with offices throughout the United States. NWN Carousel delivers secure, innovative, and scalable cloud solutions for private- and public- sector organizations. The company was founded in 2000, and customers have trusted it to improve their operational efficiency and productivity while also managing business risks and providing a predictable cost model.

As a Cisco Gold partner, NWN Carousel has deep expertise across Cisco's vast portfolio of communications, network, and security technologies. These capabilities enable its team to design, implement, and support Cisco technology-based solutions to meet the unique needs of each customer. Through professional and managed services and flexible cloud deployments, NWN Carousel helps clients achieve agility and utilize technology effectively.

NWN Carousel brings its expertise to Cary's IT staff by deploying, monitoring, and managing foundational capabilities that leverage Cisco technology, including:

- **Upgraded, hybrid work-ready voice system:** With an aging voice system, Cary knew it needed an upgrade. The town wanted to support remote work but did not have the IT staff to deploy and manage a new system. To meet its needs, NWN Carousel deployed a Cisco Hosted Collaboration Solution (HCS), including mobile remote access.
- **Webex Contact center:** As part of implementing Cary's hybrid work strategy, NWN implemented a Webex Contact Center. With this solution, remote agents can work from anywhere and be added as needed—in response to emergencies, for example.
- **Town-wide wireless:** On its journey to future-ready, Cary is working toward municipality-wide wireless coverage. In support, NWN Carousel has implemented a campus wireless and a police body camera network and is adding some 20 additional wireless sites, including parks, museums, theaters, and other public areas.
- **Smart city:** NWN Carousel is also helping Cary become a smarter city, by deploying IoT devices such as connected sensors, lights, and meters that collect and analyze data to optimize infrastructure, public utilities, and other services. For example, the company has implemented a traffic and IoT network backbone by leveraging Cisco networking technologies.

- **Smart buildings, conference rooms, and meetings:** Cary is installing Webex Meetings and Webex video units to support town council meetings and conference rooms, as well as integrating Webex with Microsoft Teams. NWN Carousel is also deploying Cisco Spaces to provide a vital link between the data available in Cary's buildings and insights to help create safer and smarter workplaces.
- **Security focus:** Security is critical for businesses and municipalities—especially in supporting hybrid work. To improve Cary's security posture, NWN Carousel provides ongoing assistance for a broad portfolio of Cisco security technologies, including Cisco Secure Endpoint; Cisco Umbrella® to help track, monitor, and secure internet traffic; Cisco Secure Network Analytics; Cisco Identify Services Engine (ISE) to help monitor and protect the network; and Cisco firewalls and VPNs to help protect hybrid workers from cyberattacks.

In addition, NWN Carousel provides 24x7 support for many of these capabilities. This enables Ms. Coughlin to focus her limited IT staff on work that leverages its unique expertise and understanding of Cary's needs as well as furthering the town's goal of becoming a leading, future-ready municipality.

Business results

Nicole Coughlin is passionate about improving the lives of all who live in and visit Cary. She believes that leveraging innovative technology can play a key role. However, when she became the town's CIO in 2015, she quickly realized that existing IT staff, though smart and hardworking, lacked exposure to the broad technology landscape potentially available to digitally transform the town. For example, staff lacked the facilities and experience to trial and implement new technologies and had deployed a limited wireless infrastructure.

Given this situation, Ms. Coughlin focused on helping staff members leverage technology to make their jobs easier, work more efficiently, and get better results. Her strategy was to partner with providers who could not only introduce new technologies but also take on tactical day-to-day management responsibilities where appropriate.

NWN Carousel and Cisco played a critical role in this strategy. NWN Carousel, for example, helped Cary's IT staff better understand LAN and WAN security, as well as cloud migration strategies and smart city technology. The company transformed a city campus into a laboratory where it could test and integrate new technologies, including Cisco's. NWN Carousel toured Cisco's state-of-the-art facilities to obtain blueprints on how to make hybrid work more efficient and secure.

Following are additional key business goals achieved by the Town of Cary:

- Implemented an easily scalable, predictable cost model supported by the NWN Carousel as-a-service portfolio
- Met and exceeded citizen expectations of exceptional services
- Hired and retained superior IT talent, while focusing on delivering more strategic outcomes
- Leveraged technology to better prepare for potentially challenging future events

Today, Cary is well on its way to leveraging a broad portfolio of technologies, as it becomes an even smarter city.

Going forward

One can argue that the challenges Ms. Coughlin and her staff faced in leveraging innovative technology to make Cary future-ready are shared by all municipalities. Citizen expectations are high. Hybrid work is here to stay. Potential security threats from bad actors are real and constant. It is impossible for a municipality's IT staff to address all challenges effectively—and this is where technology partners become critical pieces in the puzzle.

NWN Carousel is one such partner, providing expertise, experience, and solutions to meet the Town of Cary's needs. Cisco is another partner through its broad portfolio of innovative and foundational communications, networking, and security solutions.

Together, NWN Carousel and Cisco not only augment Cary's IT team, but also provide blueprints to help other municipalities as they strive to become future-ready.

Call to action

Listen to Nicole Coughlin discuss Cary's transformation by tuning into [NWN Carousel's podcast "Small Town, Big Innovation."](#)

Product list

Network management

- DNA Center® Network Management and Automation
- Cisco Spaces

Security and VPN

- Cisco Secure Endpoint (formally AMP for endpoints)
- Cisco Umbrella
- Cisco Secure Network Analytics (formally Stealthwatch)
- Cisco Identify Services Engine (ISE)
- Cisco Next-generation firewalls (NGFW) and VPNs

Video

- Webex video units

Voice and IP communications

- Cisco Hosted Collaboration Solution
- Webex Contact Center
- Webex Meetings

Wireless

- Full range of Cisco wireless infrastructure and access points