

Largest Free Public Wi-Fi Mesh Network

HOW IT BEGAN

In September 2020, Hidalgo County received CARES funding from the government. This was great, except the funding needed to be spent by December 2020. SmartWAVE worked as a Partner to Insight to provide Wi-Fi broadband access to the unserved and underserved areas in the county. With such little infrastructure already in place, this 4-month time frame posed some challenges.

SOLUTIONS

This Wi-Fi project also became a utility project, remediating existing streetlights and along with installation of new ones. Once the infrastructure was in place, SmartWAVE began to install Ruckus outdoor APs on streetlights using a smart mesh wireless network.

Due to time restraints, SmartWAVE was unable to follow their typical methodology. This required completing task in a different order than usual to accelerate the timeline of deployment. Even so, SmartWAVE was able to build the largest mesh network in the United States.

KEY TAKE AWAYS

The digital divide has always been a problem, the pandemic just brought it to light.

Assets such as streetlights, utility poles, traffic signals, towers, and water tanks are crucial to a successful deployment of these broadband networks.

Regardless of race, religion, or color everyone deserves access to the internet to enable them to participate in the community.

AT A GLANCE

Challenges

- Lack of Power
- Lack of Assets
- Time Restraints

Results

- 35,000+ residents served
- 3,400 access points
- 5,000+ wireless radios of mesh, PTP and PTMP equipment
- 20 sq miles of Wi-Fi coverage
- 16 constructed towers



"Broadband access is not a luxury, it is an essential tool that must be available for all Texas

That is why I am making the expansion of broadband access an emergency item this session."

Greg Abbott
Governor of Texas

