



# Red Cross leverages MPLS WAN capabilities

**Customer:** Red Cross of Greater Idaho

**Business type:** Regional Disaster Relief, non-profit

**Website:** [www.redcrossidaho.org](http://www.redcrossidaho.org)

**Number of locations:** 5

**Headquarters:** Boise, ID

**Network type:** MPLS WAN

**Challenge:** Improve application performance across regional sites and within each LAN

**Solution:** MPLS-based WAN utilizing available connectivity at each site, leverage partnerships to address application related issues



**American  
Red Cross  
of Greater Idaho**

## Background

Headquartered on Cole Road in Boise, Idaho, The Greater Idaho chapter of the American Red Cross coordinates and provides a number of services to our communities throughout the state. Their primary mission is disaster relief and community preparedness. In this role they promote readiness as the best safeguard against potential disasters, small and large. This is supported through a variety of resources including training for individuals or for groups. In addition to disaster relief, the Idaho operation also offers the community a number of safety related training courses. First-aid courses cover topics such as CPR and wilderness first-aid while safety courses include lifeguarding, care giving, and babysitting certifications. The Red Cross also serves as a communication link to armed forces families serving abroad—often an invaluable resource to those families.

Coordinating and managing these services across their five locations throughout Idaho means that communication is critical.

Communications such as phone services, Internet access, and internal management systems are vital to delivering key services when disasters strike. And because the Red Cross is a completely self-funded operation, cost, value, performance, and reliability are always a concern when implementing new solutions.

When the Idaho chapter approached Syringa Networks, they were operating with three different providers across their five sites with some locations limited to public Internet access relying on VPNs to tie their offices together. This, coupled with a disparate LAN strategy at each location, created a high latency environment. As a result, the shared applications became slow and unreliable while their VoIP solution was experiencing poor quality at some locations.

## The goals for the project:

- Create a private network between locations to improve performance
- Improve internal LAN systems
- Resolve VoIP performance issues
- Keep cost structures within the current levels

# Multi-site solution improves performance, reduces cost

## Solution

To address the latency issues and to maximize their communication dollars, Syringa Networks leveraged their MPLS network to incorporate each of the sites using the available connectivity. This meant a combination of DSL circuits and T1s brought together on a WAN environment, reducing latency between sites and improving application performance. By taking advantage of the any-to-any capability of MPLS, the solution also provided a modest cost savings to the Red Cross.

The next element of the solution was resolving the ongoing challenges the Red Cross faces when trying to manage their internal LAN and IT requirements. This is not an uncommon challenge for many organizations who are not in a position to cost justify a dedicated IT staff. To address this the Red Cross team identified a volunteer IT resource that was able to step in and work with them without adding costs to their project.

After months of issues with their other providers, Red Cross had a solution that

worked. Betsy Hammar, the Operations Manager for the Chapter, shared her response to the Syringa Networks solution in a letter where she wrote,

"I couldn't be more proud to announce that our network is officially in place. I have spoken several times with staff in the Lewiston office with absolutely no static, no cut-outs, and clear voice!"

## Benefits

As is the case with many of our customers, working with Syringa Networks not only met their needs, but also exceeded the chapter's expectations.

*"I owe a lot of thanks to the whole team of professionals that contributed to making this project work."*

*Betsy Hammar*

*Operations Manager*

*American Red Cross*

Said Betsy, "Our district offices...struggled with technical issues beyond their control with their phones... It eventually became evident, though, that there was more at stake. Our chapter stood to gain financially by making changes. I also felt confident that we would get better service than we have through our previous provider."

## The benefits of their new service:

- Improved VoIP performance
- Better performance of mission critical applications
- Maximized use of man-hours
- More efficient utilization of resources
- Reduced monthly cost

With the MPLS-based solution in place, the Red Cross of Greater Idaho is able to more efficiently coordinate emergency and community resources across their multiple locations. The new network solution enhances the ability of the Idaho Red Cross to deliver on their mission—helping communities prepare for and respond to disasters.

## Unmatched service

Syringa Networks provides your business with more than a connection to the Internet—we are a trusted partner that works with you to develop a customized solution to meet the needs of your business. We provide your business with the added security of a 24x7x365 Network Surveillance Center and a 24x7 live-answer support center.

*Contact us today to find out how we can be your partner for success.*

