

# Northern Iowa County Government Agency Looks to Avaya for Reliable Communications Solution



## Avaya IP Office delivers immediate ROI and new level of stability

When Ken Bahls joined Cerro Gordo County as Director of IT, he faced several challenges that he characterizes as common in small counties. One pressing issue was a phone system that hadn't been properly maintained and required immediate attention.

"The phone system we had wasn't updated on a regular basis and that caused business continuity issues and resulted in exorbitant maintenance costs," Bahls explains.

He quickly identified Avaya IP Office as the answer to the phone problems and describes the solution as "an ideal fit for small and medium-sized counties."

"IP Office has helped stabilize our network and provided the failover we were lacking," says Bahls. "For resource-constrained county agencies, it's very compelling in terms of the price point and the value offered."

Bahls and his IT team of five migrated to Avaya IP Office, which supports 200 users at Cerro Gordo's two primary locations, the courthouse and the law enforcement complex. Not only did the Avaya implementation result in a boost in reliability, it provided rapid and significant ROI.

## Rapid ROI

"When I first arrived, we had no means of backing up the phone system," says Bahls. "There are always those things that keep you up at night, and



### Challenges

- Address aging, neglected phone system to rein in exorbitant maintenance fees
- Gain communications stability necessary to run law enforcement and courthouse

### Value Created

- Immediate, significant ROI realized
- Reliable, easy to manage phone solution
- IT team freed up, can focus on value-added initiatives
- Access to 21<sup>st</sup>-Century phone features and functionality

this was one of them. I had to worry about the system crashing any time we had a power blip or a lightning storm, which is quite frequent in the summers in Iowa.”

Bahls and his team required a phone system with failover and needed to address rising maintenance costs.

“The fact that the phone system had almost never been updated meant the maintenance was outrageous and going to get worse,” says Bahls. “With IP Office, we’re light years ahead of where we were less than a year ago.”

In choosing a new phone solution, Bahls looked at competitive products. In the end, the IP Office value, features and ease of use won his business.

“Choosing Avaya was basically a ‘no-brainer’ from a business value standpoint,” explains Bahls. “The ROI was incredible – we got five years of maintenance for less than what it would have cost for one year of maintenance on the old system before the scheduled increase.”

Bahls worked closely with Avaya Partner Carrier Access IT to deploy Avaya IP Office and he can’t speak highly enough of the experience.

“Carrier Access IT did a tremendous job,” recalls Bahls. “My style is to move fairly quickly and Carrier Access IT was very responsive. They helped us through the project management and implementation, as well as the aftercare and making sure things worked. It’s been a great experience.”

### Reliability, peace of mind

In addition to the significant ROI provided by the Avaya IP Office, Bahls and his team are enjoying easier administration and greater peace of mind.

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– **Ken Bahls**, director of IT, Cerro Gordo County Law Enforcement Complex



With IP Office, all of the agency’s phone infrastructure is backed up and Bahls is able to maintain it and keep it up to date from a security standpoint. Automatic failover between the courthouse and Law Enforcement Complex is also boosting the reliability of the phone system.

“Administratively, Avaya IP Office is much easier to maintain,” says Bahls.

From an end-user perspective, Bahls explains that sometimes ‘no news is good news.’

“For our end users, change is kind of a bad word,” he says. “So, we define our success by the fact that our end users didn’t actually notice a lot of change. From an end-user perspective, it was a smooth transition.”

The stability that IP Office has brought to the county has also freed up IT staff time to focus on more value-added projects.

## Leveraging features

Looking toward the future, Bahls isn’t worried about scalability, as his Avaya IP Office can support up to 3,000 end users.

“Avaya IP Office is a very feature-rich system,” says Bahls. “Moving forward, we’re really focused on using and getting more value out of these great features we already have.”

Bahls and his IT team have found the mobile twinning functionality very useful. They plan to roll that out to the general end-user population along with instant messaging and additional unified communications features.

“I speak highly of Avaya, working with them has been a positive experience for us and we’re very happy with IP Office,” concludes Bahls

### Solutions

- Avaya IP Office™ Platform

## About Cerro Gordo County

Cerro Gordo County, located in Northern Iowa, has a population of 43,000 residents within its sixteen townships and ten incorporated cities.