

GETTING REAL ABOUT CRE TECH:

How Airwavz is fixing wireless woes for property owners



BY BRANDI SMITH

Within minutes of DFW airport and tucked along the shores of North Lake, Cypress Waters is a 1,000-acre live/work community currently being developed by Billingsley Company. Its sustainable design will feature retail, multi-family housing, parks, and trails, as well as more than 4.5 million square feet of office space.

"We're building The Offices of Cypress Waters, exceptional Class A office buildings," says Ryan Lemaster, Billingsley's vice president of information technology. "But one of the biggest problems was a lack of cell phone coverage."

It's a challenge many developers face: raw land with considerable acreage -- primed for development -- but without amenities, such as cellular service.

"That became an issue in the first few years of Cypress Waters. We were getting complaints about both congestion and cell phone coverage at the properties," Lemaster says.

The company began researching its options, which he admits were limited with its small IT group.

"We do not really have the manpower to install and operate our own DAS (distributed antenna system), which also requires a lot of up-front capital," says Lemaster. "That's when we started putting some feelers out to see what options were available."

Before long, Lemaster was introduced to the team at Airwavz Solutions, which designs, develops, owns, and operates wireless infrastructure platforms as a service for building owners and enterprise customers.

"The real estate community has adopted, and is pursuing many exciting advances in technology, CRE Tech, all

of which require investments in wired and wireless infrastructure," says Chris Zack, the company's chief revenue officer. "Airwavz understands how to align the infrastructure resources with the business applications to ensure network sustainability and financial objectives; both as expense recovery and revenue creation."

The company's leadership team has been involved in the wireless industry since its inception. Over the past three decades, they've helped deploy billions of dollars of wireless infrastructure.

"We're pleased with what we've accomplished for our customers," says Ron Proleika, Airwavz vice president of marketing. "We've got some great commercial real estate partners who have been with us for a lot of years, and we've worked on some challenging projects with them."

In the case of Billingsley and Cypress Waters, the relationship started by initiating conversations with cell phone carriers to build the infrastructure needed to service tenants.

"Current technology infrastructure solutions in the



Source: Cypress Waters

Continued on Page 20 >

GETTING REAL ABOUT CRE TECH:

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< Continued from Page 18



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marketplace assume an 'all-or-nothing' proposition," says Zack. "Airwvz Solutions offerings provide both financial flexibility and solution scalability to address unique use-cases and diverse business cases facing the real estate community."

It's all about finding the right-size solution for the client. For example, Lemaster says Airwvz initially proposed a third-party neutral carrier solution, which would involve all carriers chipping in.

"The carriers really weren't receptive to that. They had really just been prioritizing jobs where there was some other advantage to them, such as whether somebody else was contributing," he explains.

The next option was Airwvz' WISE (wireless infrastructure service enhancement) program. It involves the property owner investing a small amount in the cost of infrastructure as a negotiating tool to help carriers buy in. Billingsley signed on and very quickly entered into discussions with AT&T, Verizon, and T-Mobile.

"Those agreements got executed for six of our multi-tenanted buildings last year. They started installation in February of this year, and the physical construction is more or less complete. We're just waiting to get some of the cellular providers' radios in the buildings to get the system live and active," says Lemaster. "We are really excited to start getting some of these buildings

online here in hopefully the next 90 days."

Having worked in IT for nearly 15 years, Lemaster knows how quickly technology can evolve. He started with the Geek Squad in its early days, eventually working for managed service provider Twist Solutions before he came on with client Billingsley full time. He's watched real estate slowly adopt new tech as it comes online but says there's been a huge transition in the past few years.

"IT used to be an afterthought, but now it's a priority," Lemaster says. "Smart building technology is something that is at all the trade shows right now."

He adds that it's comforting to know Airwvz will be there to provide the support needed to keep Billingsley properties, such as Cypress Waters, not just online, but at the forefront of tech.

"As property owners seek ways to improve performance, marketability, and valuation of their assets, most of the solutions are found in technology enhancements," says Zack. "Airwvz infrastructure investments support all three of these initiatives in both B2B and B2C relationship structures."

One of the big conversations in CRE Tech today revolves around 5G, something that's easily addressed through the Airwvz partnership.

"5G and IoT talking points can introduce a lot of

confusion and hesitancy in technology decisions over concerns of making directional mistakes," Zack says. "Airwvz provides a simple approach to enabling monetizable infrastructure capable of supporting future evolving technologies; both wired and wireless."

That's another reason Lemaster says he's happy to have connected with the Airwvz team.

"They are going to maintain the system and upgrade it as 5G becomes available. Once it's out there, we'll have it as well," he says. "We want to make sure we've got the best coverage possible, so we have happy tenants and happy residents out there."

Having happy clients, like Billingsley, is what matters most to the staff at Airwvz, who recognize that its 10-year initial term is a considerable commitment.

"We're working together to help make something last a really long time. We're not just trying to sell something and move on," stresses Proleika.

Zack adds: "You have to have alignment. You have to have trust. You have to be credible. Airwvz commits to delivering these values to our customers with every interaction.

To learn more about Airwvz Solutions and how its technology can work for you, visit [Airwvz.com](https://www.airwvz.com) or call 833-AIRWVZ ■