Iowa Communications Network Operations Center

▲ ICN's new creative, collaborative, visual operations environment.

Managing operations in a visual, collaborative environment

The Iowa Communications Network (ICN) is one of the only state-owned carrier tele-communication networks in the United States. The ICN is responsible for over 8,400 miles of fiber cabling and 19,000 circuits that provide primary broadband access to government, education, healthcare, and public safety sectors in Iowa.

In 2013, the ICN started out on a journey to create a visual operations center capable of providing advanced, carrier-grade support for their operations. Until this point, operations were managed from a bull-pen, cubicle-style environment that didn't reflect the collaborative setting that ICN envisioned for their operations. The idea was to create a scalable, cooperative environment capable of moving at the quick pace of the operations team.

"We're a fiber, wide-area network and we wanted something that could grow and use the current infrastructure that we have instead of relying on video switchers in multiple locations. If information is up on a video wall, we wanted to have the ability to bring it up on a second wall, whether that is in another building close by, or 200 miles away," said John Borden, Telecommunications Technology Enterprise Expert, ICN.

"We were very impressed with the rigidity and stability of the system itself. It's not only a great foundation for us to build the BRIC on, but a tool that will allow our team to be visual and do what they do better, faster and in a more collaborative way."

John Borden,
Telecommunications Technology Enterprise Expert, ICN

Customer:
Iowa Communications Network

Location:
Des Moines, Iowa, United States

Industry/Market:
Government
Power and utilities

Partners:
CCS Presentation Systems

Requirements:
- Visual, collaborative environment
- Multiple video inputs capable of handling any format
- Ease of use
- Reliable performance

Summary:
The Iowa Communications Network recreates their operations center using Christie LCD and Phoenix technology to create a visual and collaborative environment to manage their vast communications network.

Products:
- Christie Phoenix (9)
- Christie FHD552-X (12)

Results:
Working closely with CCS Presentation Systems, a new collaborative environment has been implemented in the Broadband Information Center at the Iowa Communications Network. Centered on Christie technology, the team is able to react to critical infrastructure issues faster and more collaboratively than ever before.

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Two years later, working closely with CCS Presentation Systems, the ICN launched their Broadband Information Center (BRIC). Located in the center of their operations in Des Moines, the BRIC, powered by a Christie® display and processing solution, is surrounded by glass walls and boasts two video walls featuring 12 Christie FHD552-X HD LCD panels in total. The BRIC is prominently located inside the ICN operations center, making it a natural focal point for employees and visitors.

"It's kind of a 'wow' factor," said Zach Potter, Account Executive, CCS Presentation Systems. "It's not like many other network operations centers that are located in the basement and not ever seen except for the people working in them."

To bring the collaborative environment to life, ICN completed their Christie solution by pairing the LCD panels with 9 Christie Phoenix® units, capable of displaying any type of video input needed by the operations center – from current news feeds, to engineering information and designs. The Phoenix units give the ICN team the ability to display any laptop in the BRIC on the video wall, allowing team-based problem solving to begin with a single click.

Now, in the event of a network outage or cyber difficulty, such as a cyber attack, where critical infrastructure being impacted, ICN is prepared to manage the situation using the BRIC as the conversation centerpiece.

"We wanted the operational aspects of the ICN to be in the forefront," said Borden. "It's very clear when people come in for meetings that ICN takes the operational environment of our network very seriously. The system allows us to actively display outages utilizing our network monitoring systems and gives us the ability to gather people in one big visual experience."

While the solution is up and running and providing the team with the collaborative environment that ICN envisioned, the team feels they are just scratching the surface of the system's overall capabilities.

"I think we'll see more and more benefits emerge as we begin to integrate other locations into the video network," continued Borden. "We were very impressed with the rigidity and stability of the system itself. It's not only a great foundation for us to build the BRIC on, but a tool that will allow our team to be visual and do what they do better, faster and in a more collaborative way."

Contact Christie
Contact us today to find out how your organization can benefit from Christie solutions.

▲ Christie Phoenix units powering the BRIC.

▲ The prominently located ICN BRIC, encased by glass walls, make it a natural focal point for employees and visitors.

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