

PROFILE

Copper State Communications grows as one-stop shop

By Alan M. Petrillo
Inside Tucson Business

Despite the anemic economy, Copper State Communications continues to grow. That probably has to do with the fact that it helps other businesses and organizations become more efficient, productive and improve their bottom lines by intergrating their communications technologies.

Copper State Communications has been in business in Tucson since 1982, providing customers with what corporate sales

director Fermin Perez calls "a one stop shop for all of their telecommunications and information technology (IT) requirements."

In addition to its Tucson corporate offices, the company opened a Phoenix office in 1987 and a Flagstaff facility in 2008. Company-wide, it has 83 employees, with 34 in Tucson. President Steve Sutton and vice president Roger Bingham are the company's founders.

Perez said Copper State Communications sells and services telephone equipment from Avaya, ShoreTel, Mitel and Toshiba, and has business partnerships with CenturyLink, TW Telecom, Integra, Paetec and more than 60 other telecommunications providers around the country.

That gives Copper State Communications the ability "to assist businesses with selecting the most appropriate, cost effective services for their phone and Internet needs."

Perez pointed out that as technology changes, the communications business also is affected.



Copper State Communications

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Courtesy Copper State Communications



Some of Copper State's Tucson employees. Front row, from left, Colleen Osland, Becki Ahrendt, Carolyn Henderson, Joanna Stidham, Phyllis Walker, Laura Wheeler, Karen Roberts and Gina Eckles. Back row Marcia Krumwiede, Rene Morales, Janine Pfeifer-Brown, David Kriegsman, Louis Anderson, Deborah Bayze, Fermin Perez and Ian Miller.

"In the old days, a business might buy a phone system from us, computers from another provider, a server from a third party and Internet services from someone else," Perez said.

"But technology is converging. Phones are now computers and computers are phones. Companies are looking for someone like Copper State Communications to help them with the complexity of converting to a simple, integrated platform," he added.

Copper State Communications has certified network engineers who install networking systems and equipment for customers, and also provide training where needed.

Perez noted that the company also is part of the Apple Certified Network.

Video surveillance services are another option offered by Copper State Communications.

For businesses that are required to track assets and monitor their facilities, Copper State Communications offers options

including analog and DVR-based systems, native IP (Internet protocol) camera solutions, offsite monitoring and response services.

Copper State Communications customers run the gamut of business and group types, including construction, manufacturing, engineering and mining, as well as schools, hospitals and medical facilities.

Perez said the company recently completed a large data infrastructure upgrade at Copper Creek Elementary School in the Amphitheater Public Schools District that now allows for high-speed Internet and video connectivity in each classroom.

Copper State Communications also installed all the fiber optic cables for the new scoreboard at the University of Arizona's football stadium.

Liz Hershberger, facilities coordinator for M3 Engineering and Technology, said her firm uses Copper State Communications for all of its networking and communication needs.

"Three years ago, we moved 467 people to a new building on Sunset Road," Hershberger said. "Copper State's people were here working day and night over the weekend so there were no lost work hours or any down time for



Copper State technician John Ahrendt routes and terminates a Cat6 cable to a data rack for a customer.

us. We've also used them to install communication and networking systems when we added a building to our Chandler facility."

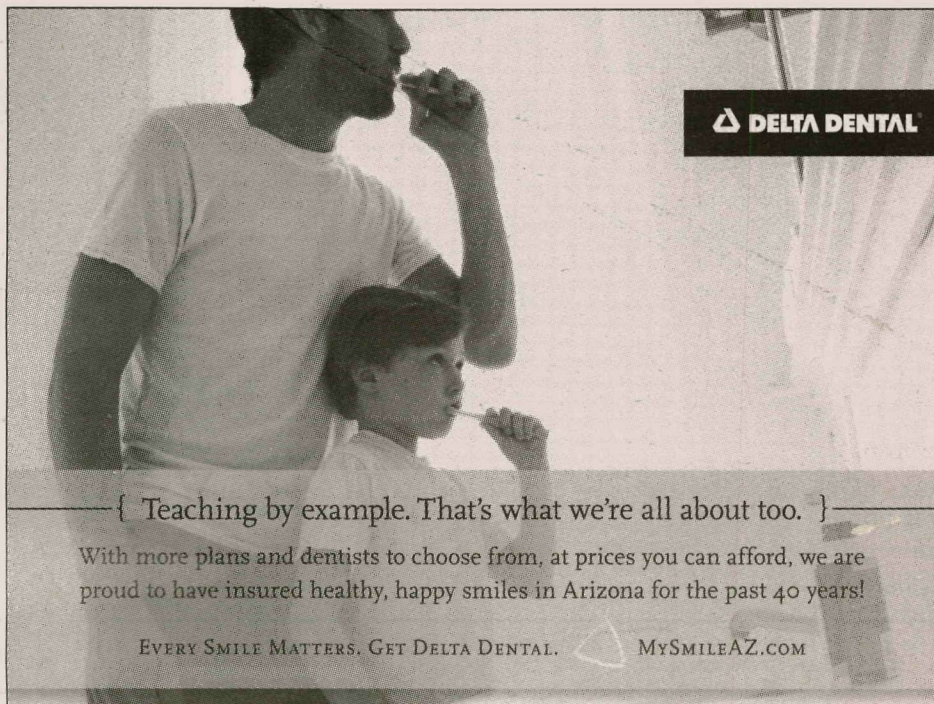
As for the future, Perez sees Copper State Communications becoming more of an integrated solution provider and focusing more on data, cloud-based services and VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol).

"Technology changes so fast, it's difficult to predict where we will be," Perez observed. "We think we'll be on the bleeding edge of technology, helping businesses communicate with their databases and pushing things into cloud technology."

Cloud technology has been around for the past 15 to 20 years to sell networking, he said.

"In the 1990s, we described it as a cloud of wires, but now instead of connecting point A to point B, we've expanded to a cloud of servers, switches and software services," Perez said.

"Many people use cloud based services and don't even know it, like Google email, which is a cloud-based service that you can get to anywhere with an internet connection and need only simple identification. We're going to see more cloud-based services in the future," he said.



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