Alaska Satellite Internet

Hughes High QoS Satellite Broadband Service Offers Businesses High-Performance Broadband across Alaska's Vast Distances

Alaska's wide-open spaces and spectacular landscapes are high on the list of qualities that make it a singular place to live. These same vast distances and rugged terrain also make Alaska a difficult place to operate businesses, especially when it comes to basics like high-performance Internet and data connections.

Will Johnson found that out firsthand when operating the Yuut Yaqungviat Flight School in the western Alaskan town of Bethel. Flying small planes goes hand-in-hand with Internet connectivity for weather reports, flight plans, radar images—almost all of the information needed for safely flying between Alaska's widely separated communities.

"We're so desperate for connectivity in this part of the world. We just couldn't get any connection that was worth a darn, and you cannot run a flight school without Internet connectivity. It's the only way you can do business today in aviation," Johnson said.

Johnson's experience with inadequate and spotty Internet connectivity led him to start Alaska Satellite Internet to bring Internet connectivity to companies like the flight school. Founded in 1992, Alaska Satellite Internet resells Hughes broadband satellite services and provides customer support for the hunting and fishing lodges, work camps, oil rigs, gold mines, government agencies, schools, police stations, and tribal offices that make Alaska's economy and public sector work.

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"We got involved with Hughes because their services work and the word spread. Word-of-mouth is very powerful in Alaska because it's hard to advertise; we have very few radio stations in the bush that accept advertising and only a few newspapers. But if you provide a good product, that word will spread, and that's what happened with the Hughes service," Johnson said.

Johnson started reselling the widely popular Hughes satellite broadband service based on the HN System in 2005. Since then, he has since installed more than 3,500 systems—a large number in the sparsely populated state.

Within the last few years, however, Alaska Satellite found that even the HN System couldn't keep up with demand for more bandwidth from Alaska's businesses and tribal organizations.

"A lot of businesses wanted to do Voice over IP (VoIP) but there just wasn't enough bandwidth. At that point we would have had to refer our customers to competitors, but Hughes came out with its HX product and High QoS service and gave us a way to keep our customers," Johnson said.

Hughes High QoS Service Meets Growing Needs

Hughes High QoS service is based on the company's advanced HX System platform. It is a turnkey, bundled package of hardware, software, and network hub capacity that enables virtual network operators (VNOs) and service providers to offer high-bandwidth Internet and private network access to customers without requiring a large upfront investment.

High QoS offers businesses download speeds of up to 10 Mbps to support high-bandwidth applications like VoIP that need prioritized traffic. High QoS enables customers to prioritize traffic by class, which ensures high quality for mission-critical business applications and latency-sensitive applications such as voice calls and full-motion video.

When Hughes rolled out its High QoS service, Johnson immediately found a market for it among Alaskan businesses, tribal organizations and tribal for-profit corporations.

"Hughes High QoS has been a very successful service for us. It has really opened up our ability to serve businesses and tribal organizations," Johnson said. "It's very popular with customers who consume a lot of bandwidth, mostly in the business market and for some residences. They like the unlimited download plans and the service's consistency. Even though we have fewer installations because the product is new, the customers are buying so much bandwidth, it makes High QoS profitable. Our customers like the consistency and low latency it provides, which is especially important when they're running multiple business applications or running a private network over multiple sites."

An especially attractive feature of Hughes High QoS for customers is the committed bitrate (CBR), Johnson said. CBR enables customers to temporarily partition their bandwidth to give specific packet traffic—usually voice—its own dedicated channel. When the prioritized traffic is finished, the channel reverts back to general bandwidth. "It's been a major selling point," he said. "If a business is spending millions on a big project, they don't want their on-site professionals slowed down by their lack of Internet access. CBR gives them an extra measure of performance."

Hughes High QoS service is well suited for providers serving specialized industries such as oil/gas exploration, maritime, and mining in remote locations. In Alaska, High QoS is particularly popular at mining company work camps where crews are isolated from their families for extended periods. One of Alaska Satellite

Internet's first High QoS installations was for a mining camp outside Juneau that wanted its employees to have telephone access to friends and family. The company has also installed High QoS at a hydroelectric plant in Sitka and will be installing it on an oil rig on the Cook Inlet.

"There are no roads or phone lines into these areas, so the workers are desperate to call home and stay in touch with their families. Satellite phones aren't dependable and the quality isn't that good, so they have turned to Hughes High QoS service for quality Internet telephony," Johnson said. "If a company is going to put men in a remote camp for months away from their families, they want to take good care of them. They're going to feed them well, give them good connectivity for phone calls, emailing, Skyping and surfing the Internet, and provide entertainment like satellite television."

Dependability of Hughes products and support is also a key selling point for High QoS in Alaska. Distance and extreme weather make maintenance and repairs difficult and expensive, Johnson said. Reliability makes Hughes High QoS service popular with business customers who can't afford extended outages.

"It's rock-solid dependable. I don't know of anything in the bush that's more dependable," he said. "The High QoS service was new to us last year, and we're expecting it to take off this summer."

About Hughes

Hughes Network Systems, LLC (Hughes) is the world's leading provider of satellite broadband for home and office, delivering innovative network technologies, managed services, and solutions for enterprises and governments globally. HughesNet® is the #1 high-speed satellite Internet service in the marketplace, with offerings to suit every budget. To date, Hughes has shipped more than 3.3 million systems to customers in over 100 countries, representing over 50 percent market share. Its products employ global standards approved by the TIA, ETSI and ITU organizations, including IPoS/DVB-S2, RSM-A, and GMR-1. Headquartered outside Washington, D.C., in Germantown, Maryland, USA, Hughes operates sales and support offices worldwide, and is a wholly owned subsidiary of EchoStar Corporation (NASDAQ: SATS), a premier global provider of satellite operations and digital TV solutions. For additional information about Hughes, please visit www.hughes.com..

To learn more about Hughes High QoS service, please call 1-888-408-9031 or visit business.hughes.com/alaska.

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