

# A world of undersea wonder gets an assist from Spectrum Enterprise

## How Unified Communications with RingCentral keeps Texas State Aquarium connected

For Texas State Aquarium, located in Corpus Christi off the Gulf of Mexico, reliable fiber connectivity matters a lot. It is how they get help to injured animals, ensure communication and coordination in the event of heavy storms and engage the public to advance its conservation-focused mission. With over half a million visitors walking through their doors every year, the aquarium needs connectivity able to keep up with growing bandwidth demand.

Voice communications were becoming a problem for staffers and top executives alike. Outdated service was not keeping up with Texas State Aquarium's growth, or its increased need to connect with the public. They needed a solution that was flexible, scalable and cost-effective. For an answer, they reached out to Spectrum Enterprise.

Jeff Vlach, Director of Information Technology at Texas State Aquarium, knew he wanted a cloud-based communications solution that was able to expand with the Aquarium's needs.

"The main driver behind our unified communications upgrade was our new executive leadership team," Vlach explains, "They had asked for certain features that our previous voice equipment didn't support. They were pleased when one of our Spectrum Enterprise partners presented a solution that met all their requirements."

"Beyond that, management overhead and support for an on-premises telephone system can be quite a bit," he notes. "The patching, the updating, hardware replacement...It's a large project every couple of years and I just don't have the budget to do that."

Now, with Spectrum Enterprise technology and support, Texas State Aquarium staff members enjoy a voice communications system outfitted with features that include email notifications and mobile apps, better suited for a staff on the go. Today they have the flexibility they need, the dependability they expect and ease-of-use to better handle their busy lives. Best of all, its cost can be managed as an operating expense.

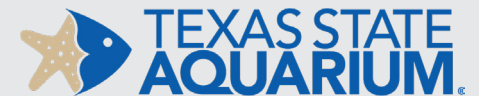
"With our new voice communications system, everything works the way it should. I can manage the entire system from my mobile device, change numbers on the fly, forward calls to different numbers. Having that ability to quickly make changes when I need to is really, really nice."

- Jeff Vlach, Director of Information Technology,  
Texas State Aquarium



Texas State Aquarium draws over 500,000 annual visitors. Fiber connectivity is key to their outreach strategy.

### Client profile



#### Company

Texas State Aquarium

#### Industry

Hospitality

#### Services

Dedicated Fiber Internet (DFI)  
Unified Communications with RingCentral

### Overview

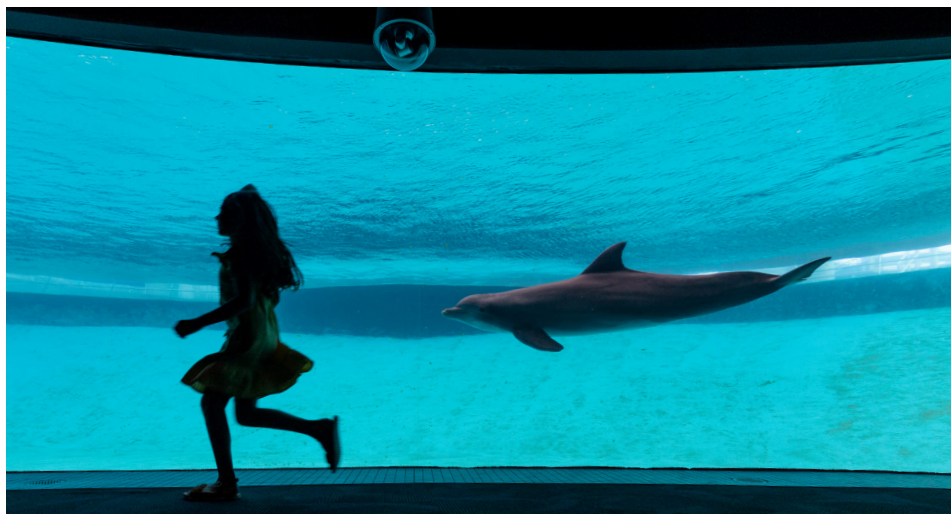
- Texas State Aquarium was not adequately serviced by an aging voice communications system.
- Texas State Aquarium wanted a solution that was both reliable and easy to understand.
- A Spectrum Enterprise account executive proposed the perfect solution to meet their needs: Unified Communications with RingCentral.

### Outcomes

- The installation of Unified Communications with RingCentral has resulted in a dynamic, flexible and scalable voice communications system.
- The system is easy to manage and even easier to use. Concerns amongst the aquarium staff about a difficult learning curve have been replaced by widespread satisfaction and an eagerness to discover what the solution can do next.

### Why it matters

- Texas State Aquarium can now better field questions from the public and quickly manage emergency situations that arise at their location on the coast of the Gulf of Mexico.
- Spectrum Enterprise connectivity also facilitates the only animal CT scan facility in the state, out of its connected Wildlife Rescue Center. This enables advances in veterinary science while restoring sick and injured animals to health.



Since it first opened in 1990, Texas State Aquarium has brought people young and old in contact with undersea creatures like the bottlenose dolphin above.

### Designed to support flexibility and safety

Eric Gamboa, Account Manager at Spectrum Enterprise, understands the needs of Texas State Aquarium very well. Because it works in a campus-style environment, it needed a service that was modular and scalable, yet controllable from a single point.

“There are offices above the aquarium itself where most of the employees are stationed,” he notes. “Then there are several other exterior locations, like the Wildlife Rescue Center they just built and outdoor facilities where they keep sharks and birds, which are all different areas well apart from each other. What they needed was voice communications that brought together all their different parts and made it easier for them to communicate.”

In the past, calls they did get were often misdirected and sometimes lost because of an unwieldy system. Simplicity and centralized control were sorely lacking as older equipment and diverse software packages did not mesh.

Cloud-based [Unified Communications with RingCentral](#) offers a single platform that is easy to install anywhere

on site. The cost of maintaining a system from the cloud is much lower than an on-premises installation, Vlach notes, especially when updates get taken care of automatically.

Waseem Samhan, Technical Solutions Consultant for Spectrum Enterprise, calls it “Similar to your water bill, where you pay on a monthly basis without worrying about the infrastructure.”

Having a reliable internet connection is crucial in a region prone to hurricanes and heavy storms. Staying safe means always being ready, with connectivity to count on in an emergency.

“Both in terms of ease of use and the quality of the equipment, everyone at Texas State Aquarium really likes Unified Communications with RingCentral a lot and has been impressed by how much of an improvement there’s been.”

– Jeff Vlach, Director of Information Technology, Texas State Aquarium



The Wildlife Rescue Center at Texas State Aquarium takes in injured sea turtles and other marine mammals every day, using Spectrum Enterprise connectivity.

For many years, that connectivity has been provided by a Spectrum Enterprise [Dedicated Fiber Internet \(DFI\)](#) circuit. In March 2022, Spectrum Enterprise boosted the capacity of that circuit. This easily performed expansion provides the aquarium with added bandwidth to take on such data-intensive challenges as the monitoring of sea turtle migration patterns and detailed readouts of veterinary information and water-quality reports.

Vlach reports latency issues have been minimal, and any repairs needed are completed quickly. Now Dedicated Fiber Internet gives them even more capacity with which to grow.

### How a better voice system channels growth

Unified Communications with RingCentral gives every staff member at Texas State Aquarium the ability to use their work number and take messages wherever they are. Vlach appreciates the ability to access the central control portal and make quick changes without requiring technical support or approval.

Executives at Texas State Aquarium can screen incoming calls while working at a desktop computer, transfer a call

from a mobile device to a desk phone or wireless device for greater mobility, and make calls from a work number even when not in the office.

“For our CEO to have that single-number reach is very useful,” Vlach says. “When he is calling someone in the community, they know it’s him because they can see his number. The old system didn’t have anything like that. Just the ability he has now to play office voicemails from home, it’s a huge time saver.”

### A learning curve without the curve

Getting a new voice communications system installed can be daunting to any enterprise, especially one that depends as much on public awareness as Texas State Aquarium.

“The work efficiency with our new Spectrum Enterprise voice system is fantastic. It allows us to manage everything ourselves and make the changes and additions we need to so we can work better on the go.”

– Jeff Vlach, Director of Information Technology, Texas State Aquarium

So when Unified Communications with RingCentral was introduced in early 2023, Vlach braced himself for staff complaints. What he got instead were raves.

Within minutes of it being introduced, he remembers, the mood among aquarium staff shifted from anxiety to open enjoyment.

“It went from, ‘Oh, gosh, we have a new system I have to learn’ to ‘Look at all the cool stuff we can do now,’” Vlach remembers. “They really enjoyed the training process; how intuitive the system is and how well it suits their work styles.”

Such flexibility is very important at Texas State Aquarium. A day at the office can involve looking after hundreds of fish and animals on exhibit, driving out to a site to bring in an injured animal and just being part of an operation that is a major tourism destination in South Texas.

“Unified Communications with RingCentral definitely fits that ease-of-use in management category,” Vlach says. “People now can direct work calls to their mobile device via their app or redirect it to their desk phone when they are in the office. Because many of our staff don’t get to spend a lot of time in their office, they like having a system that moves with them.”

### Taking care of what matters

One feature of Unified Communications with RingCentral is a message-only option for people calling in to report injured wildlife. A new Wildlife Rescue Center was opened at Texas State Aquarium in March 2023.

“We get a lot of people leaving messages about injured wildlife at the Rescue Center,” Vlach says. “We needed a way to tell them immediately that it’s not safe to approach an injured animal, however big or small. With Unified



Protecting the local sea turtle population is critical to Texas State Aquarium and part of their conservation mission.

Communications with RingCentral, we now have a quick and easy way to set up a warning message and an automatic email notification so our staff will be alerted to the problem.”

Texas State Aquarium also uses its fiber connectivity to run the only CT scan facility for animals in the state, housed at the Wildlife Rescue Center. Specialists on-site use Spectrum Enterprise connectivity to share images and consult with veterinary science experts anywhere in the world.

The scalability of Spectrum Enterprise technology means Texas State Aquarium can always add more capacity to meet its growing needs.

Just as critical is the massive lift in efficiency. Big things, like setting up communications for new departments, are managed more

“Since I’ve been here in 2016, we’ve always had Spectrum Enterprise fiber connectivity. I would describe any interruption of service during that time as very minor and quickly resolved.”

- Jeff Vlach, Director of Information Technology, Texas State Aquarium



Arthur is one of the two rescued North American River Otters that became part of the Texas State Aquarium’s family after being deemed non-releasable.

easily. Smaller things, like switching an employee’s contact information, get done in little time at all.

“With the last system we had, it was pretty much you couldn’t do anything,” Vlach recalls. “You had to open up a trouble ticket, and then two days later maybe your issue is resolved. Just this morning, I was modifying four different phone extensions in the office, and it took me less than five minutes.”

Because Unified Communications with RingCentral allows Vlach to manage his communications portal remotely, he can reorganize staff contact information whenever natural disasters or other issues interfere with normal operations.

“If we have a hurricane, we have to plan on what to do with our animals on exhibit and in our care,” he says. “Telecommunications is a big part of that. Having that internet connectivity with Spectrum Enterprise, and the ability to manage the phone system from anywhere on the fly, is how we can meet those requirements for disaster resiliency.”



Zeppo the macaw is found in the Caribbean Jungle wing at the Texas State Aquarium.



The bottlenose dolphins at the Texas State Aquarium serve as animal ambassadors for their species.

#### About Spectrum Enterprise

Spectrum Enterprise, a part of Charter Communications, Inc., is a national provider of scalable, fiber technology solutions serving many of America’s largest businesses and communications service providers. The broad Spectrum Enterprise portfolio includes [networking and managed services solutions](#); [Internet access](#), [Ethernet access and networks](#), [Voice](#) and [TV solutions](#). The Spectrum Enterprise team of experts works closely with clients to achieve greater business success by providing solutions designed to meet their evolving needs. For more information, visit [enterprise.spectrum.com](https://enterprise.spectrum.com).

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