

Hsu's Ginseng scales up connectivity to become a modern enterprise

Spectrum Enterprise helps Hsu's Ginseng to continue their remarkable success story

Here's something about Marathon County, Wisconsin that you might not know: Ninety-five percent of the nation's ginseng crop is grown in Wisconsin, and 90-95 percent of Wisconsin-produced ginseng is grown in Marathon County. Hsu's Ginseng Enterprises has been supporting Marathon County ginseng farmers since 1974 and selling its products across Asia and the United States to individual consumers and wholesalers all the while.

As the company continued to grow and expand, the operations stretched out over five states and two countries (USA and Canada). In addition, their network also serves a farms division, a separate business division known as Global Distribution, as well as an LLP which serves as the property management ownership company of Hsu's Ginseng Enterprises. As a result, it became harder and harder to manage communications and provide adequate bandwidth securely, whenever and wherever it was needed, in such a geographically dispersed enterprise.

Today, although the product is still grown in traditional "gardens," the operations that support the entire enterprise are run on a secure, modern, managed network, and company communications are managed with Spectrum Enterprise

Unified Communications as a Service (UCaaS). [Managed Network Edge](#) from Spectrum Enterprise is delivered securely over a fiber-based Ethernet network.

One reason for the continued growth is that Wisconsin ginseng is considered the best in the world, according to the Taiwanese ambassador to the U.S. In Asia, ginseng root is used in a wide variety of products, ranging from toothpaste to healthcare products as well as crystals, extract, and powder capsules, and is available in whole root form.

"This product is unique for Wisconsin because it is an agricultural product primarily exported and consumed abroad," explains Will Hsu, President, of Hsu's Ginseng Enterprises, in an interview with [Wisconsin Public Radio](#). "This industry only works if we can get our product into the hands of foreign consumers." Helping the Hsu family and their company continue to grow is where Spectrum Enterprise comes in.

"I have the responsibility for outside contacts and relationships with IT partners. That includes our headquarters, and our multiple entities, both within our enterprise umbrella as well as farms and our other entities. Our IT department is very small, lead by an amazing



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Client profile



Company

Hsu's Ginseng Enterprises

Industry

Retail and wholesale

Services

Ethernet Services
Dedicated Fiber Internet (DFI)
Managed Network Edge
Managed Router Service
Managed Network WiFi
Unified Communications with RingCentral
Wireless Internet Access

Overview

- Hsu's Ginseng Enterprises needed to ramp up their communications capabilities, network reliability, cybersecurity and bandwidth availability to continue their successful growth on an international stage.
- The ginseng producer partnered with Spectrum Enterprise and decided on a variety of managed solutions that can tackle even the toughest connectivity and bandwidth needs of today's international business climate.

Outcomes

- Hsu's Ginseng anticipates a reduction in cost between 25% and 30% on their current phone services, with the added benefit of a better designed phone system, due to the company-wide installation of a fully managed Unified Communications with RingCentral solution.
- Managed services and solutions from Spectrum Enterprise have significantly reduced the burden on the IT staff at Hsu's Ginseng, allowing that staff the time to concentrate on strategic efforts.

Why it matters

- Hsu's Ginseng increased cybersecurity with Managed Network Edge, which includes security features provided and fully managed by Spectrum Enterprise personnel.
- The operations that support the entire enterprise are run on a secure, modern, managed network, and company communications are handled with Spectrum Enterprise Unified Communications as a Service (UCaaS).



Hsu's Ginseng Enterprises grows all their crops in the traditional manner, yet fully understands the operational advantages a modernized network brings them.

bilingual staff member who implements and maintains our technology within our branches, entities, and employees. My role is simply to assist in developing partnerships to support my team," says Mike Klemp-North, Vice President Administration and Facilities at Hsu's Ginseng Enterprises. "I'm fortunate to have Heidi Wolfgram, Nathan Conachen and rest of the team that we have here in Wisconsin. They all understand our business, and what we need to continue to move forward." The Spectrum Enterprise team provides Hsu's a consultative approach to designing, implementing, maintaining and protecting the network.

Heidi Wolfgram, Senior Project Manager for Spectrum Enterprise explains, "They're growing ginseng and shipping it worldwide from Wisconsin, and that's not an industry you normally think of that needs a bunch of technology, but they do." As the company reviewed their operations it found that it had inconsistent cyber and physical security, insufficient or unreliable bandwidth, and a plethora of phone services and providers. Until recently,

the company had not focused on network infrastructure, and it did not have a technology partner they could rely on.

A network to build on

Klemp-North came on board at Hsu's five years ago, while the agricultural company was having [Dedicated Fiber Internet \(DFI\)](#) installed. He found that the bandwidth available was much more than he thought Hsu's would ever possibly need. However, as he added more solutions and services, he began to see the value of the scalable bandwidth, "But now we get the benefits of managed services which

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- Mike Klemp-North, Vice President Administration and Facilities at Hsu's Ginseng Enterprises



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is a lot nicer with that bandwidth," he explains. "So right now, we've installed fiber connections between most of our branches, sort of the bigger players first. But we've moved everybody in the United States to managed network services."

As he explains, the company has come to rely on those managed services. "We've been going through some reorganization staff-wise; we don't have as many feet on the ground," Klemp-North explains, in an assessment of staffing issues that are currently occurring nationwide. "I am flying by the seat of my pants. And one of the things that have worked well with Spectrum Enterprise is that with the support teams folks, I have that connection I need to gain the true value in our partnership."

He continues, "With Spectrum Enterprise, you don't need to be an IT person to change something. You can just log on and submit a ticket. They respond very quickly and say 'Okay, we'll look and follow up.' The ability to do it online is so much better than when I was with

a technology vendor, one of the Spectrum Enterprise competitors, where I used to have to sit on hold for four hours."

"If the Internet were to go out in Hsu's LA branch, I'll get an alert immediately. We can resolve it internally via the magic of submitting a ticket," he explains. "Spectrum Enterprise will get support staff out there so that our LA staff doesn't even need to worry about it. In the past, they had to call somebody and who do they even call? They don't remember who the vendor is. Instead of them having to call four or five providers, I can just submit one

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- Mike Klemp-North, Vice President Administration and Facilities at Hsu's Ginseng Enterprises

ticket. Or, even better, I'll get a text or an alert from Spectrum Enterprise saying, 'We know this is down, we're working on it.' And that is incredibly helpful."

Essential cybersecurity upgrades

Managed Network Edge, with its security features provided and fully managed by Spectrum Enterprise personnel, has improved cybersecurity at Hsu's. "We had branches that didn't have firewalls, or they just had residential routers and Wi-Fi, and they would complain about them not working, and then they'd just go buy another \$100 one," he explains. "With Managed Network Edge, we got all the firewalls and routers included."

Cybersecurity measures have been amplified, while cybersecurity insurance costs have decreased, with the implementation of managed services. "If you don't have VPNs for remote workers, your cybersecurity insurance increases," Klemp-North explains. "So, it's a necessary thing to put it in. And then when you look at how it connects with the Meraki pieces and the Unified Communications and all this stuff, it's like, why are we going to try to do it ourselves? At times with Spectrum Enterprise I just think, 'Oh, it's so convenient. Look, it automatically happened.'"

Significant savings and improved communications with UCaaS

Klemp-North is looking forward to the cost savings UCaaS will bring Hsu's. "We will have a unified communication system between all our entities, which will streamline our phones. I mean, with branches in four different states, we're getting phone bills and who is tracking that?" he asks. "We're cleaning up the administration and the building out of our IT needs. Once the UCaaS is



Hsu's Ginseng and their Spectrum Enterprise partners are investigating how best to use the new, modernized network and Managed Network WiFi for better humidity and temperature control of ginseng during the preparation process.

installed, we'll have a reduction in cost between 25% and 30% on our current phone services, and we'll have a better design."

Continued growth in partnership with Spectrum Enterprise

Klemp-North explains that the company will use the Managed Network Edge solution to install cameras in its Houston facility "And then we're going to start looking at doing that as an internal control point in our other facilities. It's a safety check for us, it's nice to have those cameras for security." He continues, "We have a close colleague in the business who unfortunately has been burglarized twice in the last three years, losing hundreds of thousands of dollars of product, and he was injured. It's scary, and those cameras will help beef up security."

"Right now, now the partnership with Spectrum Enterprise is allowing us to move forward without having to hire more staff. And I'm fortunate to have the team that we have here in Wisconsin. They all understand our business," Klemp-North explains. Because of that commitment,

"We have an infrastructure that was creatively built, and I can take great satisfaction in saying, "This is working, let's build the next layer."

The ginseng industry in the United States is at a crossroads today. Like many other agricultural sectors, individual growers are disappearing, and the Hsu family mourns the loss of their fellow family farmers. Overall, the industry has not experienced sustained growth. However, Hsu's Ginseng has been able to survive and thrive. This, in part, is "Due to the use of Spectrum Enterprise solutions and services, all of which allows us to focus on, and control, operational costs," explains Klemp-North.

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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.

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