

Case Study: Evolve Property Management Partners with DC Access to Offer WiFi

Evolve Property Management, LLC, is a leading property development and property management company in Washington, DC. As a development company, Evolve, LLC purchases vacant, mismanaged and underutilized properties for the purpose of restoration or adaptive re-use. In addition to managing the properties it owns, Evolve also provides a host of management services for a variety of condominium, cooperative and tenant associations as well as single and multi-family rentals, offering services and options that help residents “live better.”

Problem

For most apartment and condominium residents, especially those living in the nation’s capital, access to high-speed Internet is no longer viewed as an amenity, but as a necessity. About seven years ago, Evolve recognized the need to make it easy for residents to access a high-speed connection, but was concerned about the impact of integrating broadband technology into historic buildings.

“It’s not historically accurate to have cables running down the hallways or on the building’s exterior,” explains Christopher Swanson, co-owner of Evolve. “We needed a broadband solution that would meet our resident’s needs while maintaining the historic integrity of each property.”

In addition, Evolve has a strong commitment to supporting local businesses, so its preference was to work with a DC-based Internet provider – a tall order in an industry where broadband solutions (including Cable, DSL, and WiFi) are dominated by national providers.

Solution

In 2003, Evolve entered into an agreement with DC Access to provide Wireless Internet at a number of its multi-family buildings. DC Access is DC’s first and only Wireless Internet Service Provider (WISP) and is locally owned by the husband-and-wife team of Matt Wade and Martha Huizenga. The company provides WiFi to more than 500 subscribers in DC and has partnerships with several property management companies.

Evolve selected WiFi from DC Access because it offers a reliable, always-on broadband connection and because it’s a perfect choice for historic properties. “WiFi access points and any necessary wires are nearly invisible, and DC Access locates the roof antennas in back and out of sight in order to maintain each building’s historic integrity and curb appeal,” Swanson says.

Results

Evolve Properties has partnered with DC Access since 2003. DC Access now offers WiFi at six multi-family properties owned or managed by Evolve, with several more planned over the next year. Evolve properties served by DC Access include the Audubon, the Barbara, the Lavenia, the Marday, Pierce School Lofts, and Pierce School Annex.

Each Evolve property has presented unique challenges. “Any time you have technicians working in a building, you’re concerned about the potential for damage,” Swanson says. “We know we can count on DC Access to do meticulous work that maintains each building’s integrity. They do a site survey before starting to work so we know exactly what to expect, and they communicate with us at every step about the installation.”

For instance, Pierce School Lofts is an elementary school that Evolve renovated and adapted for residential use. The 23,000 square-foot building includes a 9,500 square foot two-floor home and seven other loft units. Like many historic properties in the Capitol Hill area, the building features brick and concrete construction, which can make installing equipment particularly challenging. It was essential that WiFi equipment and cabling not detract from the building’s historic character or result in damage to the building’s infrastructure.

In this instance, DC Access was able to do the WiFi installation during the building’s renovation. “This was an ideal situation that allowed us to conceal all of the cabling inside the walls,” says Matt Wade, CEO at DC Access. “For other historic properties, we use architecturally appropriate molding and other techniques to disguise cabling and antenna mounts.”

The partnership with DC Access gives Evolve residents easy access to high-speed Internet, with minimal impact on each property. Residents who choose to subscribe receive a discount and also enjoy fast, friendly service from a local provider.

www.dcaccess.net

www.evolvedc.com