

case study

Department of Emergency Services Finds Perfect System to Safeguard Cell Tower Sites

ECKey provides higher-level protection and full data access at fraction of competitor's cost

In the United States, there are over 100,000 cellphone tower sites. These locations often house expensive and critical emergency, telecommunications and other radio technologies. Cell towers are an essential part of the nation's critical communications infrastructure – without cell and radio connectivity, emergency communications to contact and direct first responders would be significantly impaired.



The Challenge

Chester County, one of the three original Pennsylvania counties created by William Penn in 1682, is located in the southeastern corner of the state. The Chester County Department of Emergency Services (DES) has approximately 32 cell tower sites and, until recently, the most secure form of technology used to guard these sites was lock and key or a simple keypad.



DES was experiencing an increase of incidents of copper theft, vandalism, and graffiti at their cell tower sites. In addition, DES staff had no way to grant access to technicians arriving at sites unannounced and no audit trail of who was coming and going at any of the sites. There are many solutions on the market to deal with these pressing needs to upgrade security, but the county had a significant constraint – it was not possible to install network connections at each of the widely-distributed sites within their budget and time limitations.

With ECKey, DES officials use their cell phones to gain and grant access to any of their cell tower sites.



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The Solution

Officials from DES sought ideas to solve their wide array of security challenges. The Protection Bureau, an SMD 100 company located in Chester County, had recently completed the ECKey certification course and demonstrated the ECKey EK7 Stand-Alone Access System with hosted VIZpin® Visitor/Access Management to the decision makers at DES.



The DES decided to install the EK7 reader with VIZpin at approximately 20 of the county's cell tower sites because the solution offers a wide range of features and benefits few other systems could for the cost.

The ECKey solution is scalable—there is no limit to the number of sites you can add.

With ECKey, DES officials use their cell phones to gain and grant access to any of the cell tower sites; there are no keys, fobs, or card keys; installation and administrative costs are a fraction of competing systems; and data associated with each site is available in the cloud from each approved official's smart phone. No more driving to each site, no more limited data access from a dedicated PC.

Installation Highlights

- With ECKey, Chester County DES has the potential to control all of their critical infrastructure sites with one cloud-based system and minimum hardware.
- The installation will save the county more than \$80,000 when compared to the closest competitor.
- ECKey integrates the features of a standard access control management system into a simple Bluetooth reader, providing an easier-to-use system at a lower cost.
- Without a network connection at each site, there was no audit trail of access activity. With the ECKey solution, all data travels from the reader through the smart-phone to the cloud and back again. No network connection is required and the critical data is available any-time through a web-based portal.
- The ECKey solution is scalable — there is no limit to the number of sites you can add. DES can add 5 or 10 sites at any time, depending on when they have the budget and time.
- Under the old lock and key or keypad systems, the county had considerable liability and expense exposure. Anytime a key was lost, the re-keying cost for all those sites was onerous and time consuming. With ECKey, access can be revoked in minutes without going to the site or paying for new hardware.

The installation will save the county more than \$80,000.

For more information on how we can customize a solution for you, please visit ECKey.com.