

NJBIZ

ALL BUSINESS ♦ ALL NEW JERSEY

October 2, 2017

WEB INSURANCE

NJFX preserves internet in the face of disaster

BY ARTHUR AUGUSTYN

The destructive force of a hurricane can cause massive problems for the business world. Specifically buildings such as data centers, which house internet infrastructure can be flooded or destroyed.

For example, when Hurricane Sandy hit New Jersey and New York in 2012, data centers located in these areas were flooded. The damage to these important buildings prevented internet traffic from Europe to pass through the United States to its destination in South America.

The internet may be one of the rare technologies that everyone uses but very few people actually know how it works. The vulnerability of our internet infrastructure went over the heads of most Americans at the time, especially those concerned with other problems caused by the superstorm, but

to experts in the field — Sandy was a wake-up call.

“I knew too much; I knew how things really worked,” **Gil Santaliz** said, the CEO and Founder of **New Jersey Fiber Exchange**, a company based in Wall, NJ that provides an alternate landing spot for internet traffic outside of New York City.

The recent destruction caused by hurricanes Harvey and Irma along the eastern seaboard of the United States has renewed the concern that core components of America’s infrastructure are defenseless to large-scale disasters.

Santaliz had been in the communications industry for more than two decades before he founded a metro fiber network company called **4Connections LLC** in 2001. He sold the company in 2008 to **Cablevision**, but his knowledge of the internet infrastructure limitations led him to start NJFX.

The internet may appear to

“Whenever you’re going from New York to New Jersey, it’s like a taxi system, they have to pay money to cross over between the two because of tariff rates. The internet works the same way.”

- Samuel Conn



The data center for NJFX sits at 64 feet above sea level in a sea-fortified structure. - COURTESY NJFX CABLES

work like magic, but its connective infrastructure is reliant on deep sea cables that are laid across the ocean floor to connect continents to one other. Experts have estimated there’s just over a dozen cables for the entire world and they currently have a limited number of landing points.

New York City became a hotspot for internet landing points thanks to **AT&T** and its monopoly over the industry up until the mid 1980s. Since then, more landing points have popped up, such as in Miami or Chicago, but the options are limited. For example, data sent from a financial company in Dublin to its client in New Jersey must be rerouted through New York City, causing slowdowns and additional charges.

“Whenever you’re going from New York to New Jersey, it’s like a taxi system, they have to pay money to cross over between the two because of tariff rates. The internet works the same way, you have to pay a certain amount of money [for every] destination hop,” President and CEO of **NJEdge Samuel Conn** said.

NJEdge utilizes NJFX’s services for its tier 3 data centers, which NJFX rents out to interested customers. According to Conn, NJFX is the only facility of its type in southern New Jersey, especially when considering its security accommodations.

The facility for NJFX sits at 64 feet above sea level in a sea-



Gil Santaliz

fortified structure. By comparison, the White House is 34 feet above sea level and even the highest point of Manhattan is lower than NJFX’s facility.

Secure infrastructure with faster connectivity may seem insignificant considering the enhanced speed is measured in milliseconds, but to a growing amount of industries, the speed is necessary.

“If you’re the financial trading company, [speed] is the only thing that’s important,” CEO of **Aquacomms Nigel Bayliff** said. Aquacomms uses the facility to connect to businesses located in South America.

NJFX is carrier neutral, meaning it is not tied to a telecommunication company like AT&T. This allows small businesses to utilize the company’s service just as readily as multinational corporations that require direct access.

“Amazon said they’re looking for a new home. Having a facility like this and having these assets could make our cities more attractive,” Santaliz said.

Email: AAAugustyn@njbiz.com