Case Study

FutureLink® Hand-off Box Helps Launch 5G

Location: Tampa, Florida

Date: February 2021

Background

New 5G technologies promise to transform the connected world. But before becoming widely available, 5G is launching in select cities and in highly trafficked venues like convention centers, arenas, and sports stadiums.

The latter case is true in Tampa, Florida, where a 5G buildout was recently completed at Raymond James Stadium. The 75,000 seat stadium, equipped with 5G capabilities throughout its interior and on the grounds immediately outside of the building, offers 5G network access to visitors for events ranging from professional and collegiate sports to festivals and musical acts. By design, the technologies improve connectivity, enhance the visitor experience, and meet the expectations of a modern world.

The Challenge

Although right-sizing densification and launching a network is challenging in any environment, a truncated timeline ensuring the work finished ahead of upcoming sport seasons compounded the challenge at Raymond James Stadium. Therefore, it was important to identify and account for critical milestones and time-consuming tasks like confirming the site build, selecting materials, and the physical installation at the outset.

Products Used

- FutureLink® Hand-Off Box

Equipping a stadium venue with 5G technologies means installing a full suite of data transfer and connectivity hardware throughout the stadium's campus, and ensuring that those components create a seamless flow of information up and down the network. A clean signal transfer from the wireline portion of the network to the wireless network components is vital to maintaining this high-speed flow of information. A terminal enclosure can manage this type of signal hand-off, and for the Raymond James Stadium build, a limited number of options were available to satisfy the project specification.

Custom Cable, a network services company headquartered in Tampa, was tasked with selecting and installing 5G components at the stadium. Jeffrey Norris led the team and his prior experience with 5G network builds informed his selection of the components for the project, including the the hand-off terminal boxes.

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The criteria Norris required for the hand-off box included:

- Compact Size / Footprint
- Pre-terminated Connections
- Weather-proof Design
- Serviceability

Norris and the Custom Cable team hoped to easily fit the terminal box within light poles scattered throughout the stadium grounds, to cut down installation time with a pre-terminated option, and to ensure reliability through weather-resistant designs and easy access to internal components.

The Solution

PPC Broadband introduced its FutureLink® Hand-off Box (HOB) as a custom-tailored option that satisfied the project specification as well as Custom Cable's list of product requirements.

The FutureLink HOB is small enough to allow two enclosures at each terminal, offers a pre-terminated option, is weather-proof, and is lockable for added reliability and security. It also includes design elements that allow quick, easy, and unobstructed access to all fiber connection points within the enclosure – a unique feature that enables cleaning, inspection, and easy connection to F2 ports.

Faster Installation

Pre-terminated connectors drastically reduced installation time

20% Fewer Splice Points

The FutureLink® Hand-off Box drove out more than 20% of splice points from the project

Saved Labor, Saved Time

Increased install efficiency resulted in labor-and-time related cost savings

The Results

Norris estimates that the PPC FutureLink Hand-off Box resulted in as much as a 75% reduction in installation time compared to alternative options. The pre-terminated solution drove out more than 20% of splice points from the project, and the saved labor and time ultimately meant cost savings for those building the 5G network. And the Custom Cable team completed installation of the enclosures ahead of the project deadline.

"Once we came across PPC's hand-off box, it was quickly apparent that it was our best option for this project," said Norris.

"It had the smallest footprint and offered us cost savings on top of time and labor savings," Norris continued. "All of these were important to us considering the site needs and the time constraints of the project."