

The Gazette

Telecom Services of Iowa keeps up with 'where things are going'

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CEDAR RAPIDS — As father and son, Mark Hazlett and Brett Hazlett have developed a great working relationship.

The two run Telecom Services of Iowa, a company based in Cedar Rapids that provides a variety of telecommunications services.

“Our primary focus is on the sale of phone systems to businesses,” Mark said. “That always will be our focus.”

They work with a number of companies, providing systems that range from connecting six phones, all the way up to a large company campus with more than 400 phones.

Telecom Services has customers in about a 60-mile radius of Cedar Rapids including Iowa City, Waterloo and Cedar Falls, as well as a bit of work in the Dubuque and Des Moines areas.

“We have five staff members here in Cedar Rapids and one in Des Moines,” Mark said. “We are small by design.

“Personal support is key. Our customers know us by name and we have a lot of long-term customers.”

Brett noted that interactions with customers have certainly changed over the past several years though.

“We do a lot of troubleshooting over the phone first to see if the issue is with the phone company or with the phone system,” he said. “And we have a lot less service calls going on location than we used to. Now we can just jump on remotely to help solve a customer’s problem or our customers are able to handle it themselves.

“The systems themselves are more user friendly or companies have their own IT departments in-house.”

Mark got his start with the phone company 38 years ago and decided to start his own business in 2001.

Brett, and Nick McNew, a longtime employee, joined the company just a few years after it got started and manages the service side of the business.

While telephone systems still are the primary focus of Telecom Services, Mark explained they've recently updated the company moniker to TSIowa.

"We no longer just do telecom products," he said. "A big part of our sales has become surveillance camera systems and network infrastructure, including cabling and wireless access networks. TSI has grown to stand for telecommunications, surveillance and infrastructure."

"Surveillance systems were something added to our product line as more and more customers requested them, Brett explained. "These aren't security cameras. They are systems that allow our customers to track what was happening now or what happened last night."

Mark and Brett recently opened a sister company, Refurbished Telecom Solutions, which refurbishes Samsung business telephones and systems to sell nationwide to other distributors and dealers. "RTS also recycles no longer used telephone systems for end users and vendors in the areas we cover."

They currently are focusing on unified messaging and mobility.

"Unified messaging turns your voicemail messages into wave files that are then delivered to your email," Mark said. "And our mobility options allow someone to call my direct line which can also ring to my cellphone. That's where things are going."

At a glance

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