

# THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

Newspaper Clipping

## Wired for work

**High-tech infrastructure  
critical to successful  
business operation**

By Debra Gelbart



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**E**xperts say how wired a workspace is should be an important consideration before you buy a condo or townhome that will also be your office.

"A building that offers network infrastructure shares the costs for installing and maintaining the most powerful tools for the entire building — which dramatically cuts costs for individual users," said Rob Lyles, principal with Deco Communities, which developed Edison Midtown in Phoenix, a condo project designed to cater to the entrepreneurial homeowner. "Homeowners certainly can augment their network, but this is often very expensive and offers more of a 'patch' solution for their personal needs."

### **Plug-in-ready**

A plug-in-ready infrastructure available at move-in is optimal, Lyles said, because buyers know exactly what to expect from a connectivity standpoint and the access and bandwidth will be consistent. "We have all dealt with internet/network inconsistencies and issues at home and in the workplace — a condo owner will have peace of mind knowing they will always have fast consistent access and connectivity at their residence," he said.

Ideally, the network in the building should provide both wireless internet to the common areas such as clubrooms, exercise facilities and pool areas, and a wired internet connection to the condo unit itself, advised Jeff Beall, president of Digital Commercial Systems in Phoenix.

The minimum infrastructure requirement for a condominium buyer will include a wireless router located centrally in relation to the floor plan of the home, said Beall [of Digital Commercial Systems], who is helping three condo projects in Phoenix — Contour on Campbell; The Mason Townhomes; and Portland on the Park — install an extensive network infrastructure.

### **Prime connections**

Larger spaces and/or multi-level homes will require a wireless access point to extend the internet signal and provide predictable coverage. A wired connection will be important for home office application.

"Wired connections will always perform better than their wireless counterparts," Beall said. "A best practice is to have both. Another best practice is to pay attention to the channel set-up on the wireless device. Most of the better brands of routers will have an automatic channel selector that finds the best channel based upon other routers in proximity."

Beall also said Wi-Fi in all common areas should be expected with secured access. "Residents should be able to roam the building with their smart-phone, tablet or laptop with predictable connectivity to the internet," he said.

All of this will perform best when installed at the time of the condo building's

construction. Practically speaking, Beall said, you can “only wire a condominium once — and that is during construction.”

A condo development intended for at least some home office activity should contain “an interconnected fiber/Cat 6, the non-proprietary backbone that can support high-density environments,” said Craig Hutchinson, president of Vicidiam, a Salt Lake City-based internet services company.

The way people work has changed, Lyles [of Deco Communities] said, and it is

becoming expected that “multifamily housing offers high-level connectivity, catering to those that work from home whether it is a home-based business or simply an owner who works from home from time to time.”

#### **Prepared for the future**

The rate in which bandwidth consumption is growing requires builders and developers to ensure their current networks are ready for tomorrow’s needs, said Hutchinson, who is also helping Portland on the Park and Contour on Campbell, as well as Optima Kierland (a condominium development in Scottsdale) with their technical infrastructure.

For example, Hutchinson pointed out, 10 years ago no one was thinking video streaming was going to be driving 80 percent of peak network utilization. “Properties that ran coaxial cabling instead of Cat 5 or 6 (or fiber) are feeling significant pain on both a performance front and financially,” he said. “They are now facing the reality that a large capital expenditure is needed to get their property’s network in a position to meet tenant (or buyer) demand.”

#### **Questions to ask**

Depending on your need to utilize cloud-based applications, you should ask the condo community’s sales representative about both download and upload internet speeds.

“There are vendors in the market today that offer what is known as symmetrical internet services,” Beall said. “This means the upload speed and the download speed will be the same. Several developers have embraced this premium service to offer the live/work buyer optimal services for their lifestyle,” he said, adding: “The speeds are incredible, too. No more buffering for movies and no more waiting to upload that important business file.”