

# Building stronger communities and brighter futures

A dairy cooperative's new network is as reliable and hardworking as its farmers

## Upstate Niagara Cooperative

[www.upstateniagara.com](http://www.upstateniagara.com)

- The co-op's purpose is to Nourish Life
- Since 1965, the farmer-owned co-op has produced, manufactured and distributed high-quality, fresh and delicious dairy products
- Includes over 250 family-owned farms
- Serves customers nationwide



### Challenges

- 24/7 operations made scheduling maintenance and downtime difficult
- Required higher availability to support modern farming practices
- Outdated telephony systems hindered seamless communication
- Needed more resilient connections between locations

### Solutions

- [Lumen® SD-WAN](#)
- [Lumen® Solutions for Microsoft Teams](#)
- [Lumen® Voice Complete®](#)
- [Lumen® SIP Trunking](#)
- [Lumen® Dedicated Internet Access \(DIA\)](#)
- [Lumen Customer Premises Equipment \(CPE\)](#)

### Results

- Achieved 98% uptime
- A network that supports 24/7/365 operations
- Improved redundancy and connectivity
- Enhanced resiliency for continued expansion

  
**UPSTATE NIAGARA**  
COOPERATIVE, INC.

**98%**

uptime

**~ 240**

family farms supported

**~ 1,454**

employees supported

**LUMEN®**

## Challenge

### Outdated network infrastructure hinders farmers

For generations, the farmers of the Upstate Niagara Cooperative have nourished life by growing sustainable feed, safeguarding local waterways, and providing high-quality dairy products to families nationwide.

This dedication requires extensive and continuous operations, as milk production never stops.

“Cows produce milk every day, which means we always have to be prepared,” said Ralph Caballero, Infrastructure Manager at Upstate Niagara Cooperative. “We need a communication network that can keep pace with us all the time, which includes higher availability, multiple circuits, and diverse solutions to sustain our operations.”

However, the cooperative’s previous network was increasingly insufficient for the demands of modern farming. Scheduling maintenance and downtime was a challenge, and the team needed greater availability and resiliency to support seamless communications and new technologies.

## Solution

### A robust solution set delivers seamless connectivity and resiliency

Upstate Niagara Cooperative sought a forward-thinking partner, and Lumen emerged as the top choice for its comprehensive solutions, local presence, and personalized service.

Initially dependent on MPLS, the cooperative transitioned to Lumen® SD-WAN to ease network maintenance. SD-WAN enables the use of multiple circuits within two appliances, providing automatic traffic rerouting during a circuit failure. This high availability is vital for mission-critical functions like call centers.

“Our plants are 24/7, so we don’t have windows for maintenance or downtime,” Caballero said. “We invested in solutions with Lumen to ensure higher availability, which has helped us a lot.”

Additionally, the cooperative adopted [Lumen® Voice Complete®](#) to replace costly and unreliable telephone lines, resulting in more dependable communication across all facilities.

“By increasing our stability, Lumen has increased the stability of the whole community.”

— Ralph Caballero

Infrastructure Manager, Upstate Niagara Cooperative

## Results and Future Plans

### A network that works as hard as farmers

Upstate Niagara Cooperative now enjoys reliable voice and data services with an impressive 98% uptime. The enhanced network redundancy provides uninterrupted operations, allowing the cooperative to maintain smooth workflows and seamless communication across facilities and among their 1,400+ employees.

“Lumen is offering the highest availability and network solutions for us, and it definitely makes me able to sleep better at night,” Caballero said.

The next phase of the project involves transitioning from PRI to an SIP environment to further enhance network resiliency. This upgrade will provide complete voice redundancy to support farmers, plant workers, call center agents, and others.

With Lumen’s robust, reliable, and resilient network infrastructure, Upstate Niagara Cooperative is empowered to continue focusing on its core mission: delivering healthy, high-quality dairy products to families across the country, as they have done for generations.

### Lumen Solution Set

- [Lumen® SD-WAN](#)
- [Lumen® Solutions for Microsoft Teams](#)
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