



Keeping its crews and fleet safe on the water

- **Business needs** - Better connectivity to track and dispatch the company's towboats
- **Networking solution** - AT&T Enhanced Push-to-Talk and AT&T Fleet Complete Fleet Tracker provide TowBoatUS Lake Allatoona with the bandwidth it needs to patrol and respond to calls for help, as well as track the location of all its captains and boats.
- **Business value** - Highly reliable connectivity with the ability to dispatch and track boats from an easy-to-use app.
- **Industry focus** - Boat towing, salvage, and disaster response
- **Size** - Privately held

About TowBoatUS Lake Allatoona

TowBoatUS Lake Allatoona provides towing, salvage, disaster response, wreck removal, spill response, and boating/water safety training to recreational boaters on Georgia's Lake Allatoona and Florida's Lake Okeechobee. The privately owned company is a member of the Boat Owners Association of The United States (BoatUS), the nation's largest recreational boating advocacy, services, and safety group.

The situation

The company was using multiple vendors to provide its communications services and devices. Officials wanted to streamline by working with a single company that could deliver reliable connectivity, location services, tracking, and security cameras.

Solution

TowBoatUS Lake Allatoona chose AT&T Enhanced Push-to-Talk and AT&T Fleet Complete Fleet Tracker to support its work. AT&T mobile devices with built-in hot spots enable boat captains on the water to stay in communication with dispatch. Also, AT&T connectivity delivers the feed from cameras installed on all TowBoatUS Lake Allatoona boats, providing enhanced security and peace of mind for the company owner.

Responding to calls for help on the water

BoatUS is the nation's largest organization of recreational boat owners, with over half a million dues-paying members. The organization insures over \$8 billion worth of boats. BoatUS members receive discounts on speedy, courteous service from TowBoatUS, a network of privately owned and operated towing companies. Other member perks include discounts on help with mechanical failures, battery jumps, fuel drop-offs, getting ungrounded, disaster/spill clean-up, and insurance. Bright red TowBoatUS towboats can be seen on nearly every waterway in the U.S.

Captain Christopher Day owns and operates two TowBoatUS locations. He bought his first business, TowBoatUS Lake Allatoona in Acworth, Georgia, about four years ago. In 2021, he added a new location in Lake Okeechobee, Florida. Private owners are not franchisees. "We have a contract with BoatUS to operate in a protected service area," he said.

Lake Allatoona covers nearly 12,000 acres and has 270 miles of shoreline, making it a true boaters' paradise. The lake sits just 30 miles outside of Atlanta and draws nearly 7 million boaters and water sports enthusiasts every year. It's one of the most frequently visited Corps of Engineers lakes in the nation.

The second-largest freshwater lake entirely within U.S. boundaries, Lake Okeechobee covers 730 square miles. Day said Lake Okeechobee's size is impressive. "You can fit 32 Lake Allatoonas in the Okeechobee."

Award-winning service

Four years ago, Day took a leap of faith and purchased TowBoatUS Lake Allatoona and the business has seen phenomenal growth since then. "It started out with one boat and just me running it," Day said. Today he has a fleet of five boats and as



many as 15 employees during the summer.

In January TowBoatUS Allatoona received the Tower of the Year award from TowBoatUS in recognition of the company's outstanding performance. In announcing the award, TowBoatUS officials cite the company's professionalism in providing recreational boaters with 24/7 on-water towing and assistance services. The award was bestowed on the company for its near-perfect 24-hour towing dispatch operation, high customer satisfaction, and on-water towing case management. The national organization also heaped praise on Day for his outstanding community involvement.

"I think AT&T Business goes way over and above what they are probably required to do for us."

Captain Chris Day
Owner, TowBoatUS Lake Allatoona

"We do a fundraiser every year for an Allatoona family that has had some kind of accident," Day said. Last year it raised money to help a girl who had been injured in an explosion. The year before, the event helped a 16-year-old girl who suffered a broken neck diving into the lake.

Day's commitment to the community comes from personal experience. While helping a customer in 2018, he stepped on a broken beer bottle in the water and cut his foot. "Being a man, I just wrapped it up and didn't go to the hospital," he said. The cut was infected. Within a few weeks, the infection got much worse. Day spent a month in a medically induced coma

and two additional months in the intensive care unit due to sepsis, E. coli, and staph infections. "The lake community didn't really even know me at that time. They stepped up and had fundraisers for me. That's why we try to give that back tenfold."

AT&T customer service makes all the difference

Technology has always been important in Day's business, but when he expanded his business into Florida it became even more important. Unreliable location and tracking services, a lack of bandwidth, and poor customer service hampered his day-to-day operations.

"Our biggest challenge was that some companies would have a couple of things we needed, but not everything," Day said. "We ended up using two or three companies to solve our challenges." Day was looking to streamline and simplify his technology solutions. Another local business owner recommended AT&T Business.

"They had everything I needed," Day said. "From hot spots on the boats to tablets, phones, and tracking."

And he was impressed by the level of service his account team delivered. With some of his previous providers, it wasn't uncommon for Day to wait on hold for hours. Now, he says, AT&T Business gets back to him within the day, however, he adds, "It's usually within five minutes."

"We provide five-star service to our members and customers and that's what we expect from our vendors," Day added. "I think AT&T Business goes way over and above what they are probably required to do for us."

Robust bandwidth means improved safety

Day selected AT&T Enhanced Push-to-Talk (EPTT) to manage daily operations, send and receive individual or group messages, and provide his teams with enhanced situational awareness.

“The biggest thing is knowing where somebody is at any given time,” Day said. With AT&T EPTT his dispatcher enters assignments and sends them to TowBoatUS captains. Tracking capabilities give dispatch the location of all its boats. Using the group setting for messaging means everyone knows what each crew is doing and when they return to port.



“We get a lot of calls from people asking us who we use and what type of phones we have. I always refer them to AT&T Business because we’ve had such good success”

Captain Chris Day
Owner, TowBoatUS Lake Allatoona

Poor connectivity has always been a struggle on Lake Allatoona. Day noted that service was unreliable with its previous carriers on different parts of the lake. “We took out an AT&T test phone and we didn’t have any problem with service at any point. We even got up into some little coves where nobody has service, and we didn’t have any problems.” The same is true on Lake Okeechobee. AT&T Business delivers the robust bandwidth Day needs when he is out on the water in Georgia or Florida.

Safe and sound

In addition to AT&T Enhanced Push-to-Talk, Day selected AT&T Fleet Tracker to help him manage his fleet and captains on two lakes separated by more than 500 miles. The company had been trying to track everything with an unreliable phone app. “We were running into issues with some people not having the app or not turning their location on,” Day said.

The fleet tracking solution from AT&T Business allows dispatchers to see the location of all the towboats, giving Day the edge he needed to better manage his business. It may well have saved one captain’s life when he radioed for help after becoming lost on Lake Okeechobee during a bad storm.

“It was a bad situation,” said Day. “He had his AT&T phone, which we issued, but we weren’t tracking him from that phone. For whatever reason, when he went out, he cut us off. That was a big mistake on his part.”

The situation was dire when Day texted his AT&T Business account rep at 8:30 on a Saturday night and got an immediate response. Even though AT&T Fleet Complete wasn’t yet rolled out on Day’s towboats,



his AT&T Business team quickly realized the AT&T phones offered several options to help Day find his captain.

Thanks to AT&T Business, he was able to see his captain's location and at the end of the day everyone was safe and sound. Now Day is in the process of installing AT&T Fleet Complete Fleet Tracker on all his vessels.

Cameras on the boats add another layer of security. AT&T Wireless broadband Cradlepoint routers support camera feeds from Day's towboats. The fast, reliable, and highly secure AT&T LTE network enables Day to view everything live on any of the towboats at any given time.

AT&T has it all

Day said he is impressed with the service and solutions from AT&T Business, which he sees playing an important role for his business as it continues to

grow. "The customer service is the best that we've ever dealt with," Day said. "They have pretty much any equipment we may need, so we don't have to shop around to different carriers to get our boats outfitted. It's been an all-around A+ experience."

"AT&T equipment is rugged, which is important for companies that work around water," Day continued. That's why he recommends AT&T Business to other businesses on the lakes. "We get a lot of calls from people asking us who we use and what type of phones we have. I always refer them to AT&T Business because we've had such good success."

Day looks forward to continuing his relationship with AT&T Business. "We like to be ahead of the game on everything. And I like for my captains to have the best equipment. We always look to put the tools they need in their hands. I don't think that will ever stop."