

FIRST NATIONAL BANK ALASKA SLASHES BACKUP TIME AND ELIMINATES RELIABILITY PROBLEMS

“Tape was unmanageable with the amount of data we had.

Trying to restore to our contingency site with different hardware than what we had at the bank was just a nightmare.”

Successfully meeting the challenges of doing business in the Last Frontier is how the state’s largest Alaskan-owned bank excels. This is especially important in a market where the customers live and work in remote communities in a state over one-fifth the size of the entire continental United States.

Despite distance and remoteness, First National Bank Alaska offers customers the same level of data protection and access expected from any large bank based in the Lower 48 states. “We live and work right here in Alaska. Our customers are family members and neighbors,” said Charles Hodges, Data Operations Manager for the \$2.2 billion Anchorage-based bank.

Hodges ensures that all the bank’s 29 branches, more than 700 employees and over 165,000 accounts from all corners of this immense state have secure data back up for all transactions. He’s also responsible for making sure these customers and employees have transaction data readily available, even in the face of severe weather, natural disasters and unreliable transportation.

When First National’s tape-based system became overwhelmed by the bank’s four terabytes of data, Hodges sought out an alternative.

First National needed a backup and recovery system that was scalable as the data volumes increased, but at the same time provided a higher level of efficiency and reliability than traditional tape-based solutions.

Goals

When Hodges decided to replace First National’s tape-based backup and recovery system, his goals were to:

- Increase backup reliability and security
- Reduce backup and restore windows
- Provide easy backup verification
- Accommodate growing data volumes
- Simplify configuration and restore operations
- Comply with government regulations
- Implement a successful and dependable DR solution

Challenges

Before EVault, backing up First National’s data was, in Hodges words, “an ordeal.” Nightly differential backups took up to five hours. Weekly backups of all the bank’s data could

Customer Snapshot

Name

First National Bank Alaska

Line of Business

Banking — Regional Banks and Thrifts

Location

Anchorage, Alaska

Product

Evault InfoStage® plus Agent plug-ins for Vault Backup, Microsoft Exchange Server, SQL Server and Clustering Services and EVault Report Extractor

Configuration

40 Microsoft Windows servers, more than 600 PCs, EMC disk subsystems

Capacity

6 TB

Goals

- Increase backup reliability and security
- Reduce backup and restore windows
- Provide easy backup verification
- Accommodate growing data volumes
- Simplify operations
- Comply with government regulations
- Implement a dependable DR solution

Challenges

- Large amounts of data
- Complying with federal regulations
- Data security
- Ongoing transactions during backups
- Restore quickly and reliably

Solutions

EVault InfoStage’s Adaptive Compression and Delta Pro technologies reduced backup windows and the storage footprint, while increasing reliability and flexibility.

Results

First National Bank Alaska experienced faster, more reliable backups, with improvements to security and regulatory compliance.

take as long as 33 hours, even longer when online transactions slowed servers down. More often than not, these backups failed. “On average, one out of every five weeks, I got a good backup,” Hodges recalls. But with no easy way to verify what had gone wrong, Hodges had little recourse. The volume of data also made successful disaster recovery testing at the offsite facility almost impossible.

Solution

After researching various solutions, Hodges decided to purchase EVault Infostage® disk to disk software. “We set up the hardware. EVault came on site, loaded their software. Within an hour and a half we were already starting training, making scripts of backups. Within the first day we were already backing up files that night. It was pretty impressive,” Hodges says.

Using EVault Infostage, First National backs up its transaction data nightly to an onsite disk. To comply with government regulations, First National still backs up to a tape that is stored offsite once a week, but this process is no longer an ordeal. EVault’s DeltaPro™ technology only backs up files that have been created or altered since the last backup, significantly reducing the amount of data. In addition, EVault’s Adaptive Compression technology compresses data being transmitted ensuring that day-to-day business operations are not disrupted during backup windows.

Not only is disk-to-disk faster and more reliable, but it’s easy to verify. Email alerts let Hodges know immediately when a backup has failed, along with detailed information on what exactly wasn’t backed up so he can spend his time working with EVault’s customer service team to find a solution instead of trying to pinpoint the problem himself. Though since switching to EVault, failed backups are rare.

Results

Today, First National’s weekly backups take eight hours instead of 33. Although the bank has not yet done a full DR test with the new system, when Hodges needed to restore a 500 MB file, it took less than 3 minutes. “Tape would have taken 30 minutes,” he says. Best of all, Hodges can go to work on Monday morning knowing that First National’s data has been backed up successfully.



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