

Unitrends Recovery
Success Story



Northwestern Rural Electric
Co-operative Association, Inc.

Powering Better Backup Solutions for Electric Utilities

Technology Success Story | North West REC

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Solution Highlights

Industry | Public Electric Utility

Protected Platforms:

- Virtualized Windows Servers
- Physical Windows Servers
- Virtualized Linux Servers
- SQL Databases

Solution

- Unitrends Recovery 714S

Benefits

- Ransomware Protection
- Protection against accidental deletes
- Full disaster recovery capabilities
- PCI Compliance



We don't have to change tapes anymore, I look in one place to make sure backups are taking place, easily test backups, and I can spin up a server on the appliance for recovery.

James Vondrak
IT Administrator
North West Rural Electric Cooperative



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Customer Profile

North West Rural Electric Cooperative (NWREC) is a consumer-owned electric distribution utility founded in 1938 to provide members with a safe, reliable, environmentally responsible and affordable source of electric power. NWREC, based in Orange City, Iowa provides electric service to more than 9,600 accounts in Ida, O'Brien, Plymouth and Sioux counties in northwest Iowa. Membership is made up of farm, residential, commercial, industrial and irrigation customers.

The Challenge

NWREC employees play multiple roles. James Vondrak, IT Administrator "began working for NWREC 3 years ago as an assistant, and because of retirements and shifting responsibilities I have moved to the administrator position heading up the IT resources. I manage our company's computers, tablets, servers, software, and network. I also work with the phone system and other office equipment. Sometimes we feel very short staffed." Vondrak didn't have much time to deal with a creaky tape backup process. "We were backing each server up to a tape. We had one tape per night per server. The tape drive was starting to fail and the person who supported was a one-man shop and he suddenly stopped returning phone calls. Tape gave us no way to easily verify the backups or restore single files." Vondrak began to look for a replacement system and asked his counterparts at a sister electric company, Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative (NIPCO), already a Unitrends customer, for a recommendation. "NIPCO put in a good word, and there is also an option to have a free appliance upgrade every 4 years (Unitrends Pledge Program). It also seemed easy to use, is well supported and works with all our servers and operating systems."

The Solution

NWREC purchased a Unitrends Recovery 714S. They placed the appliance at a separate location with a fiber network between offices. They archive weekly to that off-site location to NAS storage. This gives NWREC protection against a site level disaster at their primary location as the Unitrends Recovery 714S can instantly spin up failed applications if the primary servers go down. The Unitrends solution also allows NWRE to maintain PCI compliance (Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS), a set of security standards designed to ensure that companies that accept credit card information maintain a secure environment.)

The Results

"We have been fortunate not to have had a complete server crash." reports Vondrak. "We have had a few times where it was handy to restore a file that accidentally got deleted but one time a database got deleted while migrating a server. We don't have to change tapes anymore. I look in one place to make sure backups are taking place, easily test backups, and I can spin up a server on the appliance for recovery."