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Success Story

REAGAN FAMILY OF COMPANIES

Leading Power Industry Pioneer Fuels Business Continuity Improvements After Hurricane Katrina with REO™ 9000, REO 1000 and REO 4500c D2D VTL Appliances

Challenges

- Arduous tape-based backup and recovery became increasingly unreliable.
- 14-hour backup window couldn't meet desired Recovery Time Objectives.
- Cumbersome restores could take a day and substantial administration.
- Near-calamitous impact of Hurricane Katrina led to an overhaul of the company's business continuity plan.

The Solution

REO™ 9000, REO™ 4500c, REO™ 1000

Benefits

- 14-hour backup window reduced to two-and-a-half hours while data restores decreased from up to eight hours to minutes.
- Multi-streaming VTLs allow simultaneous backup and restore operations.
- REO 4500c tripled D2D backup speeds and doubled VTL capacity for retaining up to 12 weeks of data on disk for fast-growing location.

For the past half-century, businesses operated by the Reagan family of Louisiana have dominated portions of the power industry. A stellar reputation for quality products and superlative service has created a strong record of success for a quintet of organizations, including Point Eight Power, an award-winning designer and manufacturer of power control systems for commercial shipping, offshore oil and gas operations as well as infrastructure projects at the Statue of Liberty and Boston's "Big Dig;" Reagan Equipment Company, a supplier of power packages for oilfield power generation and pump markets; and American Warrior, a leading gas-compressor packager.

"Overland's REO products do a wonderful job of eliminating the scary point between production and initial recovery. Because tape is no longer our primary recovery media, we all sleep much better at night, with total confidence that we can easily meet our 12-hour RTO targets."

Craig Levesque
Director of Information Technology
The Reagan family of companies

The corporate technology team for the Reagan family of companies supports a leading-edge technology infrastructure comprising mission-critical systems, applications and data. While providing 400 employees with around-the-clock access to vital data, Reagan's IT team oversees 20 Microsoft servers along with an IBM iSeries mid-range computing platform. Reagan's corporate headquarters also safeguards nearly a terabyte of data storage, which is growing between 20-to-30 percent annually.

According to Craig Levesque, director of information technology, substantial time and effort has gone into ensuring access to corporate information. "We continually look to streamline information flow to improve project collaboration and cooperation between the businesses," he explains. "Equally important is safeguarding the businesses in event of a catastrophic disaster."

The Challenge

Over time, continuing business expansions made it harder to perform reliable, efficient data backups and restores. In particular, reliance on differing tape platforms, including DDS and DLT technologies, took a toll on nightly backups. "Backing up on four different tape technologies was labor intensive and fraught with problems," recalls Leon Langley, network administrator.

To reduce the strain of troubleshooting backup failures, Reagan's IT team deployed external tape drives to achieve greater operational compatibility. The nightly backup window still grew exponentially, taking 14 hours for full backups to tape. Since the backup process slowed the corporate network, failed backups required nighttime visits to redo the job.

Restoring data also was arduous, taking up to eight hours to locate, catalog and retrieve files from tape. "We were increasingly uncomfortable with the process," says Langley. "Consolidating data storage for all locations while adding a disk-to-disk (D2D) strategy to reduce the backup window and ease restores became a top priority."

The Solution

The Reagan team initially deployed a D2D solution on its IBM mid-range system and immediately decreased its IBM backups from two hours to 20 minutes. Upgrading to Windows Server 2003 permitted use of Shadow

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Copy, which offered low-cost recovery from file-related accidents caused by human error. For networked storage, the team sought a disk-based Virtual Tape Library (VTL) that would work with its Backup Exec software.

As a Dell shop, they steered toward EMC's storage area network (SAN) platform, which wasn't their preferred approach. "EMC's products were geared to larger enterprises and didn't meet our requirements for an economical VTL," says Levesque. "Their SANs were too expensive and lacked flexibility."

In August 2005, Hurricane Katrina cut a 250-mile swath through Louisiana overnight, forcing evacuation at many Reagan family's businesses while putting the company's backup and recovery plan to the ultimate test. Although insufficiently prepared for a disaster of this magnitude, the IT team quickly conducted full backups of its IBM and networked data before retreating to an alternate site.

Despite heavy damage to its headquarters, Reagan's corporate technology team recovered its business from three different tape media and restored operations within 72 hours, including processing payroll. Luckily, the data center was spared, enabling equipment removal and continued operations at another location. "We were luckier than most in surviving the impact of Katrina," recalls Levesque. "Still, I only gave us a 'C+' on our ability to protect our data, which prompted a complete overhaul of our business continuity plan."

This led to the determination that a Recovery Time Objective (RTO) of 12 hours had to be the maximum for restoring all systems, applications and data. Since tape-based backups exceeded 14 hours, Reagan's IT group moved aggressively to deploy D2D VTLs. Shortly thereafter, the team attended a product demonstration of Overland's REO SERIES® D2D VTL appliances, which included insights into its disk-based solutions and REO's technology roadmap.

"We were sold on Overland's stable technology, strategic corporate direction and long-range vision for the REO product line,"

notes Levesque. Within days, Overland, along with technology partner and Overland channel partner Enterprise Information Systems, helped the Reagan team implement two REO 9000s and two REO 1000s at its headquarters and other company sites.

The Benefits

Overland's REO D2D provided immediate relief from Reagan's backup pain. "Multi-streaming made a phenomenal difference," says Langley. "We decreased nightly backups to two-and-a-half hours. Restores, which once could take up to eight hours, now took minutes."

Multi-streaming permitted simultaneous backup and recovery. Ease of administration, including remote management, provided centralized control of the dispersed appliances. While the team still uses tape for long-term archival, the REOs store up to 30 days of data on disk as the first line of defense. "Overland's REO products do a wonderful job of eliminating the scary point between production and initial recovery," explains Levesque. "Because tape is no longer our primary recovery media, we sleep much better at night, with total confidence we can easily meet our 12-hour RTO targets."

Another plus with the REO is configuring the appliances as disk volumes, enabling creation of LUNs on the REO 9000s for snapshots during server upgrades or additional storage for special projects. Additionally, the company augmented backup and recovery capabilities at American Warrior after a changing business model led to 150-percent data growth in less than a year. Upgrading from a REO 1000 to the new REO 4500c delivers hardware compression to double VTL capacity.

Using the REO 4500c, the Reagan team tripled the speed of D2D backups, while reducing backup windows by nearly 75 percent. Moreover, now up to 12 weeks of disk-based data can be retained at one of its fastest growing locations. Plans are underway to leverage the expandable REO 4500c, which can scale to 45 TBs of usable

capacity, to accommodate an alternate disaster recovery site. "Overland's REO 4500c easily can augment our offsite disaster recovery requirements while giving us an extra measure of data protection should a disruption occur at one of our facilities," says Langley.

The Reagan team also is reconsidering the benefits of adding a SAN to support storage virtualization, this time reviewing Overland's ULTAMUST™ RAID high-density storage. "Overland is a trusted partner with a reputation for delivering high-quality products at reasonable prices so we'll continue to look for ways to work together," concludes Levesque. "The Reagan team has substantially improved its business continuity plan since Hurricane Katrina but we aren't standing still when it comes to offering heightened levels of data protection. Our RTO is real, not a wish and Overland Storage plays an invaluable role in helping us sustain this crucial corporate goal."

About Overland Storage

Overland Storage offers the most complete set of smart, affordable data protection appliances that ensure data is constantly protected, readily available and always there. Overland Storage brings enterprise-class capabilities to mid-range customers through affordable and reliable solutions that reduce the backup window, improve data recovery speed, simplify short- and long-term data retention and make cost-effective disaster recovery a reality for all. Overland products include award-winning NEO SERIES® and ARCVault™ tape libraries, REO SERIES® disk-based backup appliances with VTL capabilities, and ULTAMUST™ RAID high-performance, high-density storage. For more information, visit www.overlandstorage.com.



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