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Success Story

BARONA VALLEY RANCH & CASINO

Award-winning Resort & Casino Hits the Jackpot with NEO 8000 Tape Library for "Future Proof" Data Protection

Challenges

- Surge in data resulted in operating four separate tape libraries, which created substantial administrative overhead to manage.
- Reliability and performance declined as data continued to grow.
- Desired upgrade to best-in-class technology while leveraging existing investment in DLT technology.

The Solution

NEO™ 8000

Benefits

- NEO 8000 has provided one centralized system for managing backups.
- Media costs and administrative overhead have been reduced by 80 percent and 75 percent, respectively.
- NEO offers plenty of expandability for future growth with the ability to mix and match DLT and LTO drives.

Barona Valley Ranch Resort & Casino offers the best of both worlds: great gaming action that rivals the mega resorts on the Las Vegas strip combined with unique dining experiences, a luxurious hotel and world-class golf located in the tranquility and beauty of San Diego County. Owned and operated by the Barona Band of Mission Indians, the resort theme pays tribute to the founders of the reservation who moved the tribe to the Barona Ranch in 1932. Over the years, the Barona Band of Mission Indians has transformed what started out as a small Bingo Hall on the reservation into an award-winning, ranch-themed resort with a workforce of more than 3,000 people—all of whom are dedicated to providing exceptional customer service.

"Overland's NEO 8000 gave Barona an affordable way to upgrade our tape backup capabilities while providing lots of room to grow. NEO is more 'future-proof' than the other solutions we considered as it can be expanded effortlessly."

Hunter Hunstock
IT Manager
Barona Valley Ranch Resort & Casino

As part of this unwavering focus, Barona deploys the latest in casino technology, including server-based gaming, bonus programs and table game systems. The casino was the first in the industry to develop and to deploy cross-platform ticket in/ticket out "coinless" gaming technology nearly a decade ago. More recently, Barona has been recognized for

its many leading-edge technology initiatives with the 2006 Gaming Vision Award for Outstanding Achievement in Gaming Technology.

According to Hunter Hunstock, IT manager of networking and database administration for Barona Valley Ranch, a 70-member technology team keeps pace with new technologies. "Barona embraces cutting-edge technologies to offer a more personalized customer experience," he says. The IT team maintains some 70 Windows-based servers as well as several IBM AS400s, a Hitachi-based data warehouse and a storage area network. The casino's technology focus led to an exponential jump in data storage, which grew by 5 TBs over two years to nearly 50 TBs, half of which is allocated to data backups.

The Challenge

Barona's rapid rise in storage strained its existing data protection foundation, which incorporated a series of SurfRAID disk arrays and four tape libraries, including a pair of HP 5026 DLX and two HP TL891 DLX units each holding 26 DLT tapes. Maintaining the four separate libraries had become cumbersome and time consuming. "We had to replace tapes every three days," recalls Mike Bailey, network engineering supervisor for Barona Valley Ranch. "Managing backups, which took 15 hours or more a week, became a nightmare."

At the same time, the libraries started to fail, increasing maintenance costs sharply. Meanwhile, the team struggled to complete backups within a 24-hour period, canceling some jobs before completion.

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Barona recognized the need to fortify its data protection to meet its increasing storage demands while ensuring compliance with gaming industry data requirements.

The Solution

Early in 2005, Barona evaluated different solutions for centralizing tape-based backup and recovery operations. Sticking to its belief in the latest and greatest technologies, the search focused on upgrading to LTO technology while seeking a solution that would accommodate three-to-five years of constant growth. For that reason, expandability was among the main selection criteria along with speed, tape technology and the ability to mix and match LTO and DLT tape drives so Barona could maximize existing tape technology investments.

Among the initial contenders were HP, ADIC (now Quantum), Qualstar and Overland Storage. The list was shortened after Barona learned that Overland was the OEM of the HP libraries and the Qualstar offering lacked desired scalability. The final analysis focused on the ADIC/Quantum Scalar library and Overland Storage's NEO SERIES 8000. The team particularly was impressed with the robotic capabilities on the higher-end libraries but felt Scalar offered less functionality at a much higher cost. Additionally, Scalar didn't support comingling LTO and DLT tape drives, which took it out of the running.

Barona's IT team next visited Overland's nearby headquarters, toured the facilities and spoke with customer references. "We were impressed with Overland's responsiveness as well as the quality of their products," says Hunstock. "Since customer service sets us apart in our industry, we take it very

seriously. It was clear to us that Overland did too."

After a three-month evaluation, Overland's NEO 8000 emerged as the hands-down winner. In September 2005, Barona purchased its NEO 8000 from Partners Data, a San Diego-based provider of storage and backup solutions, and Overland engineers were onsite to ensure a trouble-free implementation. "The NEO 8000 deployment went very smoothly," recalls Bailey. "We installed the gear in a morning and had successfully migrated backups by the next day."

The Benefits

Barona immediately realized significant improvements in its data backup and recovery regimes. With its NEO in place, incremental backups were completed in less than an hour as the LTO tape drives performed four times faster while holding 10 times more capacity than the previous DLT drives.

At the same time, the higher-capacity drives reduced media costs and administrative overhead substantially. "We went from a full set of backups taking 52 tapes to a little more than four tapes, which cut tape costs by 80 percent," says Bailey. "The time it takes to manage the process has been slashed by more than 75 percent as it now only takes a couple of hours a week to oversee tape backups."

Since Barona has set its policies through CommVault backup and recovery software, tape backups are automatic and painless. "I rarely do anything to the NEO 8000," notes Bailey. "It continues to run reliably without interruption."

NEO's industry-leading density also gives Barona more storage capacity

per square foot than any other data center class library. As a result, the casino can keep up to six weeks of backups on the NEO at all times to expedite data recovery while still having substantial room to expand. "Overland's NEO 8000 gave Barona an affordable way to upgrade our tape backup capabilities while providing lots of room to grow," says Hunstock. "NEO is more 'future-proof' than the other solutions we considered as it can be expanded effortlessly."

Barona has activated 160 cartridge-drive slots on the NEO 8000 but since the library can accommodate up to 500 cartridges, the casino is confident the Overland tape library will play an instrumental role in the future. "On the horizon we see the NEO growing, expanding shelves and adding more tape media," concludes Hunstock. "When we expand our near-line storage as we will need to, we expect NEO to expand to keep pace. NEO allows us to protect our growing data while maintaining our fast pace of business."

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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