

Florida City Keeps Engineering Productive with Acronis® Software



The City of Plant City is a scenic and historic inland Florida community of 35,000 people living 24 miles east of Tampa Bay. While it happens that the city was named after a person, Henry Plant, the area is renowned for its extraordinary agricultural output, producing three quarters of the United States' midwinter strawberry crop, along with other offerings.

Zack Knezevic is a geographic information systems (GIS) analyst for the city's engineering department and he manages all the mapping information and data related to the city's public works, land parcel information, flood zones, traffic signs and the hundreds of types of additional information any town needs to carry out day-to-day activities. The department protects this data with Acronis Backup & Recovery 10 software.

City-critical application must be available

An ARCview® GIS application is accessed online over the city government intranet by as many as 30 users at a time from the Engineering Department and by other departments in the city. The Engineering Department is responsible for ensuring that users can reach it day and night. In addition, a larger number of businesses and residents take advantage of public Internet access to a related Google® Earth GIS application the department makes available for residents to research properties.

Until about two years ago, Knezevic and the GIS technician who works with him were resigned to putting everything else aside if the GIS system failed. *"This is something that both employees and residents depend on, so if there's a problem, the GIS group couldn't wait to fix things,"* Knezevic says. *"We're expected to keep internal and resident customer satisfaction at a high level. That means no break in service."*

Search for better protection triggered by failing disk

Knezevic concluded that it was time for a better recovery solution when a disk began to fail on the ARCview server. While they were able to copy the data over before it went dead completely, they viewed the incident as a wakeup call and decided, *"It was better to prevent an illness than to cure it."*

Organization:

City of Plant City Department of Engineering
www.plantcity.gov

Sector:

Government (civil)

Key Challenges

- Maintain very high availability of a geographic information system (GIS) used by city departments and residents alike.
- Reduce rebuild times after system failures, freeing staff for more proactive assignments.

Environment:

Windows-based physical and virtual servers running ARCview® GIS

Solution:

Acronis® Backup & Recovery™ 10 software

Benefits:

- Online imaging allows major application to be backed up without interrupting service.
- Recovery times shortened from several hours to 75 minutes or less.
- Server failures no longer a cause of anxiety
- Improves the department's emergency management capability in case of a natural disaster

They briefly looked at two options, including Norton® Ghost®, to protect the server, but neither met their functional requirements. Moreover, the latter required a server to be brought offline to create a backup image, which would block access to the GIS application. Knezevic and his supervisor already had positive experiences with Acronis home PC protection products and they expected to benefit from the enterprise-level functionality offered by the Acronis business line of software. He downloaded trial software to confirm that it had all the features they sought. *“We looked at Acronis because we needed to recover fast. We were so impressed by Acronis® Backup & Recovery™ 10’s ease of use, its included features and its ability to handle our problem that we purchased the license soon after.”*

“When many services depend on the ability to store and access data electronically, we find that the key to ending sleepless nights is redundancy in data storage” Knezevic says. “Acronis makes that redundancy manageable and easy to implement.”

They also took advantage of Acronis Backup & Recovery 10’s built-in support for up to four virtual machines at no additional cost: they created a virtual version of the server as a cost-effective way to recover the physical machine in moments in the event of a failure. More recently, the department purchased Acronis software to protect key workstations.

Main benefit: saving time

The main benefit Acronis offers is saving time, Knezevic says. In addition to imaging disks for regular back up, Knezevic also clones the disks at regular intervals. That allows him to survive a server failure without panicking. *“I can recover the most recent cloned image, and then apply the most recent backup to the two cloned disks, so it effectively takes no time to restore even if there’s a lot of data involved.”*

He gives what he calls a “perfect example” of what Acronis does to limit downtime when he recalls a recent incident where the disks on a two-drive RAID system began to fail. *“Fortunately, I was able to use Acronis to clone our RAID drives on new, larger disks. Then I took out the old disks and restored the image to the new disks. That’s what is different about Acronis,”* he says. *“It’s hot-pluggable and bootable. I’ve also done this for my workstation.”*

Hurricane-ready

Asked how different life would be within the Plant City Engineering Department if it wasn’t using Acronis, Knezevic replies, *“Without Acronis, there would be more headaches, for sure, and greater unease. In Florida, we always have the impact of hurricanes to plan for. If a hurricane threatens to damage our facility, we can take the disk images and restore them onto servers located several miles away. For another layer of protection in emergencies, we maintain another backup image in a hurricane-safe location.”*

He adds, *“We deal with many software companies, and out of all of them, there are only two that do everything they say they can do without any problems: Acronis is one of them. That’s the biggest proof of a product’s capabilities, and the reason why we like it.”*

About Acronis

Acronis is a global provider of storage management software that enables corporations and individuals to move, manage and maintain digital assets. Acronis sells innovative solutions for disaster recovery, server consolidation and virtualization migration, which allow users to maintain business continuity and reduce downtime in computing environments. Acronis software products are sold in more than 180 countries and are available in 13 languages. For additional information, please visit www.acronis.com/



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