City of Mount Dora
The Case Study

The Central Florida City of Mount Dora sits alongside Lake Dora, so named for Ms. Dora Ann Drawdy, who settled there in the mid-1800s.

Business Challenges:
Inability to back up large snapshots of critical servers; lengthy testing process

The Central Florida City of Mount Dora sits alongside Lake Dora, so named for Ms. Dora Ann Drawdy, who settled there in the mid-1800s. A lot has changed over the last 150-plus years since the city's first settlers, but Mount Dora has retained its small-town charm—with some obvious infrastructural changes. Indeed, a city of more than 12,000 residents requires a strong support system, which now includes nine city departments: police, fire, water and wastewater, city manager and clerk, public works, library, planning and development, utilities, and personnel.

Of course, cities run like any traditional small to mid-sized business, so system downtime can devastate their critical infrastructures just as severely and bring day-to-day operations to a halt. "When system downtime threatens to shut down business functions for any of Mount Dora's departments, it's easy to see how grave the impact would be," said Johnna Shamblin, IT manager for the City of Mount Dora. "And while Mount Dora is largely unaffected by coastal Florida's destructive hurricanes, we are not impervious to hardware failures, human error and other more common contributors to system downtime. So having a reliable disaster recovery system in place is critical."

But after four years using Zenith Infotech's BDR for disaster recovery, Shamblin and Assistant IT Manager Mike Andrews found that it wasn't going to be a reliable system for much longer. "Due to their storage limitations, the appliances were approaching capacity, and they were unable to back up large snapshots of our servers," explained Andrews. "If we lost a server that gave the backup problems, recovery could last a day or longer—as long as it took to move the data to a new server."

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Quorum®

To boot, testing was a time-intensive process, taking the team a few hours to test just one server. As a result, Shamblin and Andrews were able to test just once or twice a year. With time running out and a Band-Aid solution in place to hold the servers over until a new system could be deployed, Shamblin and Andrews began their search for a new disaster recovery solution.

The Solution:
Instant recovery of data, applications and systems in an all-in-one Quorum appliance

They began their search by contacting IT counterparts in other cities to find out what they were using. "Quorum's name came up and we investigated further," said Andrews. "We also considered CommVault, Terasys and Datto Backup, but Quorum stood out because it was easy to manage — perfect for a small IT team like ours. They hit a home run there. We were also attracted by Quorum's ability to use a single click to bring up the virtual recovery node of a critical server, as well as its automatic and on-demand testing capabilities."

Shamblin and Andrews found the competing solutions had some shortcomings; namely, they didn't have backup testing or they weren't an appliance. They also saw that some were software solutions that either partnered with a storage vendor or required that Mount Dora provide its own storage backend. "This adds a layer of management that we weren't interested in and couldn't support," said Shamblin. So the decision was made. The City of Mount Dora bought the Quorum solution at the end of 2012 and deployed it in early 2013. By all accounts, deployment and installation were easy and straightforward, and Quorum is now protecting about 25 servers.

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JOHNNA SHAMBLIN
IT Manager

The Impact:
Worry-free backups and recovery of data, applications and systems

Since deployment, the City of Mount Dora has luckily not had to test Quorum in a production environment, but it did note an interesting fact about the solution.

"We found that we could configure the Quorum appliance to meet the needs of our environment," said Andrews. "In a discussion with a Quorum support person during the initial installation/configuration stage, we decided to partition the appliance into two different ones. Because we run a large number of small application-type servers, that allowed us to double the amount of work that the appliance can do at one time. I was really impressed with that."

In all, Shamblin and Andrews say they've had an excellent experience with Quorum. "We've even recommended Quorum to colleagues at a recent IT conference," said Shamblin. "And in the future — budget allowing — we plan to move to the Quorum DRaaS solution." For Quorum, there's truly no greater compliment.

Business Benefits of Quorum Solution

○ One-click, instant recovery of data, applications and systems

○ On-demand and automatic testing

○ Easy to use and cost-effective

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