The City of Atascadero, California
Storage Virtualization Software

City of Atascadero realizes cost-savings, reliability and the ability to rapidly thin-provision storage with DataCore's storage virtualization software

Overview

Background:
Located an hour and half north of Santa Barbara in California, Atascadero offers a blend of natural beauty and rural lifestyle. It is a mid-size community with a small-town feel, buzzing with new businesses and a resurging downtown and economy. For more, visit www.atascadero.org/.

Problem:
Needed a solution that would allow it to meet the reliability and disaster recovery requirements for its service level agreements (SLAs), while also providing for rapid deployment of additional storage without disrupting its end users.

Solution:
A complete virtualization solution which includes a DataCore SANmelody virtual SAN with a highly-available, synchronous mirror and a remotely-replicated disaster-recovery site, and virtual servers using VMware ESX.

City of Atascadero lies an hour and half north of Santa Barbara in California - located roughly between Los Angeles and San Francisco. Sitting about 15 miles inland from the Pacific Coast, the city is comprised of 28,000 residents. Prior to DataCore, the city was using straightforward, direct-attached storage with physical servers throughout the enterprise. That changed when DataCore partner Helixstorm, Inc. deployed a virtual infrastructure at the city - encompassing both virtual servers and virtual storage.

Helixstorm did so at the behest of the city's systems administrator Phillips, who has been at the City of Atascadero for over five years. Phillips knew that in order to get the most out of VMware server virtualization (e.g. VMotion), that the servers had to be built upon a SAN foundation - as only a SAN could deliver the required high availability demanded by the virtual machines (VMs). Over the course of one weekend, the City of Atascadero went from physical servers and direct-attached storage to a virtualized environment, including a SAN.

Business Driver - Why go Virtual?

The City of Atascadero had become highly dependent on its computer systems for all of its core functionality. Additionally, the IT department is also responsible for managing data that is increasing at an exponential rate. The IT department supporting the city's IT needs required a solution that would allow it to meet the reliability and disaster recovery requirements for its service level agreements (SLAs), while also providing for rapid deployment of additional storage without disrupting its end users.

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>
> *- Ken Phillips, Systems Administrator, City of Atascadero.*

For more information on storage virtualization, please visit:
www.datacore.com

For more information on Helixstorm, Inc., please visit:
www.helixstorm.com

"We have a fairly aggressive 'restoral' policy in our service-level agreements," commented Phillips. "Our Finance Department has mandated that we cannot lose any more than four hours of data and that we must have a four-hour restoral time window. This is pretty aggressive for an organization of our size and the only way we could meet this is with virtualized servers and disaster recovery."

The "DataCore Difference"

The City of Atascadero investigated other vendors and according to Phillips DataCore gave the IT department the best combination of the features that he needed with a price point that the city could afford. "Additionally, DataCore offers excellent training and support," Phillips added. "The final consideration for us was that our professional services provider - Helixstorm - has a long relationship with DataCore and they indicated that their previous DataCore deployments were successful and well received."

Helixstorm, a Premier Partner with DataCore Software and an expert in systems integration for virtualization, storage, high availability and disaster recovery infrastructures, helped the City of Atascadero realize the benefits of virtualization by deploying DataCore's SANmelody as the backbone of its virtual infrastructure.

"Atascadero had a budget to refresh their servers using direct attached storage with no additional budget for fault tolerance, high availability, and disaster recovery," stated Aaron Schneider, director of sales engineering, Helixstorm, Inc. "We were able to deliver a new, centralized storage infrastructure using DataCore SANmelody. This solution provides high availability, fault tolerance, and disaster recovery. Atascadero can have 22 virtual machines up and running in about 11 minutes at their DR site."

Using SANmelody and server virtualization, the City of Atascadero is now able to meet their finance department's recovery time objective (RTO) of four hours, not to mention their ability to fully recover in a matter of minutes should a major disaster happen to their production environment. The City of Atascadero recently upgraded to the latest version SANmelody without any interruption of service to its end users.

Cost-savings, Reliability, and the Ability to Rapidly Thin-Provision Storage

The City of Atascadero now has twenty-two (22) virtual servers running and six physical servers. It runs the virtual infrastructure - VMware and DataCore - on HP servers (DL360s) and applications include file servers, user directories, SQL databases and Microsoft Exchange. "Pretty much all of our production environment is virtualized and DataCore provides the storage for that environment," stated Ken Phillips, systems administrator, City of Atascadero.

More than anything, Phillips stresses the reliability and scalability that DataCore delivers. "DataCore SANmelody has been 100% reliable," noted Phillips. "The biggest benefit we have seen is the fact that we can add storage without bringing anything down. Now we are not paying for any storage that we are not using. We were also looking for a product that would give us the ability to facilitate DR and thin provisioning. Both of these requirements were met with the DataCore SANmelody product."