East Texas Council of Governments Protects Data with SolarWinds Backup

Flexibility and Ease of Use Made SolarWinds Backup the Right Choice

The East Texas Council of Governments (ETCOG) is a voluntary association of counties, cities, school districts, and special districts within the 14-county East Texas region. They assist local governments in planning for common needs, cooperating for mutual benefit, and coordinating for sound regional development. While ETCOG is one entity, the team actually supports servers, databases, applications, and workstations across several locations and agencies. As Texas is a large state, some servers are located more than an hour away, providing a strong incentive to work remotely whenever possible.

ETCOG helps provide programs and services for East Texas seniors, employers, and job seekers—and that includes providing IT support for systems and applications across locations throughout the region. This puts significant responsibility on the shoulders of the IT team. Brandon Deaton, IT system administrator for ETCOG, can attest. Data protection has been a special area of interest for Brandon, and when he joined ETCOG, he began a search for the best backup product to fit the council’s needs.

“In my previous job, I used Veeam®, which made sense because everything was in one location. For ETCOG, however, SolarWinds provided the flexibility and direct-to-cloud backup that was the perfect fit,” Brandon said. His evaluation also included Unitrends, but the high cost of a proprietary appliance at every site was unappealing. “They’re all three good products, but for us, SolarWinds was the best fit,” he added.

SAVING THE DATABASE, SAVING THE DAY

During his trial of SolarWinds’ Backup, Brandon experimented with backing up an especially important SQL Server® database. One morning, the DBA came into his office very concerned this critical database had become corrupted, and the only backup she was aware of was several weeks old. “I happened to have a backup from 30 minutes earlier, and in less than 15 minutes, it was fully restored to its original location, like nothing happened,” Brandon said. “She was greatly relieved, and I had never seen a database restore done so well or so quickly. Now she trusts SolarWinds so much that she’s stopped doing her own database backups and relies on it.”
Because SolarWinds Backup performs direct-to-cloud incremental backups so efficiently, ETCOG runs backups more frequently on varying schedules according to the type of data being protected. File servers are backed up most often, followed by databases, then print servers and domain controllers. “It doesn’t use a lot of bandwidth, and incremental just take a few minutes,” Brandon explained. “Only a few MBs are being sent over the network, and it’s really quick.”

LESS ADMIN TIME, MORE SIMPLICITY

Other backup products Brandon has used required more administrative overhead to support more complexity. “I don’t need all those extra features, but I do need my backups to be securely stored in the cloud,” Brandon added. “I can’t run fiber 100 miles to support a process that was built for the single-location world. I care about how long backups and restores take, and about ease of management.” ETCOG also valued the fact that with SolarWinds, cloud storage is included in the price. There is no need to arrange for cloud services from a second vendor or buy special additional licenses to support taking backups off-site.

Because SolarWinds Backup is a SaaS application, the management dashboard is accessed via browser, and it’s fully accessible from anywhere. This adds another level of convenience for a large, distributed entity like ETCOG.

“Having our data encrypted and stored in the cloud helps protect us against ransomware,” Brandon said. “You can have the best network security in the world, but you’re only as strong as the weakest link, which is that end user clicking on an unsafe email. It’s not if this will happen, but when. Having everything backed up and securely stored off-site is comforting. It lets me sleep at night, because I know that I can easily and conveniently recover as needed. SolarWinds Backup gives me peace of mind.”