SecureWorks

NONPROFIT GETS AFFORDABLE, ENTERPRISE-LEVEL SECURITY

Eastern Maine Electric Cooperative protects member and company data, provides PCI-compliant online transactions and receives great value with Dell SecureWorks

Eastern Maine Electric Cooperative
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative
The power of human connections®

Industry: Energy | **Country:** United States | **Website:** www.emec.com

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>
> Andrew Tickle, Manager of Engineering, Eastern Maine Electric Cooperative

BUSINESS NEED

EMEC wanted to give customers the option to pay bills online. To do so, it needed to boost network security and adhere to a tight budget and resource constraints.

SOLUTION

EMEC engaged Dell SecureWorks to provide a network security solution that actively monitors all network communication, eliminates malicious traffic in real time and supports PCI-compliant online transactions.

BENEFITS

› 24x7 management and monitoring by security professionals

› Protection from internet threats

› Facilitates PCI compliance

PRODUCTS | SecureWorks Managed IPS

EASTERN MAINE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE (EMEC) IS A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION THAT DELIVERS ELECTRICAL SERVICES TO A LARGE RURAL REGION WITH BRUTALLY COLD AND ICY WINTERS.

Like the country's other 900 electric cooperatives, EMEC is owned by the people who work and live in its service area. These customer/owners, who are also called members, want to keep costs as low as possible and yet do what it takes to have reliable electricity and modern services such as online payments.

To meet its challenges, EMEC runs an extremely lean and efficient operation. With only 35 employees, the organization serves 12,600 homes and businesses spread across a 3,000-square-mile territory. "Out of our 35 employees, 13 work on lines," says Andrew Tickle, manager of engineering at EMEC. "The others are mechanics, engineers and office staff. So a very small group of people are responsible for delivering electricity to a large area. It's a huge challenge." To help meet that challenge, most employees have dual responsibilities. Tickle, for example, manages the design, construction, and maintenance of the utility's delivery grid. Some days he helps out the crews with outages or maintenance work. He's also the organization's primary IT employee.

SEEKS EFFECTIVE AND AFFORDABLE NETWORK SECURITY SOLUTION

EMEC was able to manage its own IT needs until about 10 years ago, when it decided to support online payments. Doing so required an enterprise-grade security solution that could facilitate compliance with the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS). Because it would be facing the same grade of threats as a Fortune 500 enterprise, EMEC had to decide whether it would implement its own network security solution or engage a third party. "I evaluated solutions from several vendors and also talked to quite a number of co-ops across the country," says Tickle. "We ultimately chose Dell SecureWorks iSensor Intrusion Prevention Service, because it was the highest rated solution and the Dell staff was very understanding of our requirements." EMEC's network would be protected by the global security experts at Dell SecureWorks, who continuously update iSensor's countermeasures to protect against zero-day attacks and other emerging threats on networks, without any effort from the client.

PROTECTS MEMBERS' DATA AND FACILITATES ONLINE PAYMENT SECURITY

Today, all of EMEC's inbound and outbound network traffic is monitored by Dell SecureWorks 24/7 in real time. The service blocks threats that could affect daily online payments as well as data on devices at three buildings. "It's so much easier for us to rely on Dell SecureWorks iSensor," Tickle says. "As far as intrusion prevention goes, there's no comparison. I'm really happy with Dell SecureWorks iSensor and wouldn't change it for anything."

FACILITATES EFFICIENCY AND RELIABLE SERVICES

EMEC employees have been able to keep their focus on providing reliable electricity to the cooperative's members. No one is happier about that than Andrew Tickle. "We get effective protection with Dell SecureWorks iSensor," he explains. "Dell SecureWorks staff call if a more significant event is occurring, but they still manage it." The service also notifies EMEC about other potential issues. "One time, Dell SecureWorks called me in the middle of the night to let me know our internet connection was down, so I was able to contact our ISP and get it running before our employees and customers were affected," Tickle says.

STREAMLINES REPORTING

When the company needs insight into network activity, an employee can gather the required information in minutes. Tickle says, "It's very easy to create reports from the Dell SecureWorks Client Portal that detail network activity. It takes

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just a few clicks." On the flip side, EMEC gets fast answers when questions arise. "I don't have to sit on hold for a long time when I call Dell SecureWorks," explains Tickle. "They always ask me the appropriate security questions and they're always very responsive in helping us."

FLEXIBLE SOLUTION THAT WORKS WITH EVOLVING TECHNOLOGIES AND REQUIREMENTS

EMEC has also protected its IT agility by working with Dell SecureWorks because it can implement new technologies without having to manage interoperability issues. "When we upgraded our T1 lines to 10-megabit Ethernet, I called Dell SecureWorks, and it took them about two minutes to update our network security configuration," says Tickle. "It was so easy. So we keep our technology options open with Dell SecureWorks iSensor because it can always cover what we need to have covered and it's reasonably priced."