

Paulding-Putnam Electric Cooperative Transitions IT Infrastructure to the Cloud to Provide a Superior Customer Experience

In Partnership with Aunalytics, the Cooperative Seamlessly Becomes the First Ohio Utility to Shift IT to the Cloud, Achieving Greater Efficiencies, Cost Savings, IT Elasticity, and Business Continuity Through Disaster Recovery as a Service that Delivers 99.95% Uptime

Challenge

Committed to serving the needs of its business and residential customers, Paulding Putnam Electrical Cooperative goes the extra mile to ensure its systems are resilient. Such resilience starts with exceptional IT management to ensure that operational and customer service teams are effectively supported in all areas, from internal resources management, customer account monitoring, and deploying services and maintenance teams in the field.

It is imperative that electric cooperatives in Ohio and Indiana modernize and maintain stability while energy resources (especially renewables) are added to the power generation portfolio. Strengthening resiliency at all hours of the day requires the utilities to review their delivery strategies, operational models, and information technology infrastructure to allow for timely and accurate communications and system insights to better manage operations.



About: Paulding-Putnam Electric Cooperative, Inc. (PPEC) is a member owned, member-controlled nonprofit electric distribution utility located in northwestern Ohio. PPEC is one of 25 electric co-ops in Ohio and one of 37 electric co-ops in Indiana. The cooperative is proud to serve its more than 12,900 member-owners in Paulding, Putnam, Defiance, Van Wert and Allen counties in Ohio, and Adams and Allen counties in Indiana. Since 1935, the utility has provided reliable power to rural areas with pride. As a Touchstone Energy Cooperative, PPEC is part of a national brand that conveys a promise of excellent service and community commitment by those cooperatives that decide to become Touchstone Energy marketing cooperatives.

With innovation as its hallmark, PPEC had been working with Aunalytics, who prides itself on being the advanced computing infrastructure and primary advisors powering analytics and IT innovation for traditional businesses. The project goal was to deliver expert on-demand reliable IT infrastructure, security, and support in the most cost-efficient way possible as new services and customer requirements are considered, and to ensure affordable energy prices for its subscriber members.

Aunalytics provides PPEC with 24/7/365 remote monitoring and management to mitigate the risk of valuable infrastructure not performing as required or going down. Specifically focused on server and network management, data protection, and IT security, Aunalytics manages the hardware, software, and services for the organization and works proactively to address any issues—day or night. The company’s remote monitoring agent includes client-based interactive support, performance management, alerting, asset management, and reporting. Onsite support ensures issues can be resolved in a very timely manner.

Having realized the benefits of a managed IT infrastructure—namely, the ability to provide a superior customer experience without the need to raise rates—PPEC was well-positioned to take its IT operations to the next level and shift to the cloud, making it the first cooperative in Ohio to do so. With Aunalytics’ guidance, it was ready to reach its long-term goal of achieving interoperability with a greater number of resources that the cloud can deliver.

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Solution

Through an easy-to-understand service level agreement (SLA) with Aunalytics, the utility gains access to the company's software and cloud technology suite and highly trained team of IT service professionals who act in partnership with Todd Taylor, IT Manager for PPEC, to implement Aunalytics' cloud offering:

Cloud Services – The Aunalytics cloud hosting solution provides a highly redundant and scalable platform for hosting servers, data, and applications at customized performance levels required for compute, memory, and storage to fit PPEC's needs. The solution includes cloud backup services for the utility's virtual machines residing in the Aunalytics Cloud, as well as a Microsoft services provider license agreement.

Immutable Cloud Backup – The immutable cloud backup service prevents data deletion or modification from backup storage repositories in the Aunalytics Cloud. A secondary repository that allows for object locking is created with the Aunalytics Cloud tenant portal to PPEC's specifications. The utility creates backup jobs for this repository, and schedules them as it sees fit. As the need for storage increases (or decreases), the environment will grow with it.

Disaster Recovery – The disaster recovery as a service is designed to protect the utility from an outage at its primary site due to potential catastrophic failures. Aunalytics delivers this service via the most stable and reliable methods utilizing its data centers in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan, achieving a service level of agreement of 99.95 percent uptime.



Cloud Services



**Immutable
Cloud Backup**



Disaster Recovery

“With the prevalence of today’s high-speed internet connection between rural areas and data centers, where once there was not, PPEC is able to fully transition its IT infrastructure to the cloud and remove the mundane tasks associated with the physical version,” Taylor said. “Aanalytics has reshaped our IT environment in a way that allows me to spend the lion’s share of my time leading our technical organization, instead of stop-gap measures to maintain that infrastructure.”

Benefits

Disaster recovery as a service is a core component of the Aanalytics cloud offering, and delivers assurance that PPEC can maintain business continuity even when there may be a failure of infrastructure at a primary location, power, cooling, or computer hardware; a ransomware outbreak; or individual server problems where restoration from backup is impossible.

PPEC’s data can now be backed up automatically out of region, and brought back up again to run on the disaster site. Aanalytics performs this service without the cost of the data transfers that other clouds charge, increasing the resiliency of PPEC at a very affordable cost.

Transitioning to the cloud meant that PPEC no longer needed to manage physical equipment and make capital investments when replacing equipment that had reached end of life. With this infrastructure-as-a-service model, Aanalytics took over managing all the IT infrastructure equipment, licensing of operating systems, and other maintenance issues. As a result, heavy periodic investments in equipment are now spread across monthly payments.

The utility has also gained a level of elasticity by making the transition to the cloud. Physical equipment ultimately “maxes out” to the point it needs to be replaced, or switched to different locations. Aanalytics manages all the equipment, applications, migrations, and compute behind the scenes, giving the utility an untethered and more elastic experience.

“With Aanalytics as a trusted advisor who delivers a concierge level of experience, PPEC’s transition to the cloud has been seamless,” said Taylor. “Capitalizing on the greater efficiencies, cost savings, IT elasticity, and business continuity that the cloud delivers, we are extremely pleased to provide an even better customer experience. We highly encourage our utility peers to reap the benefits that managed IT services in the cloud can offer.”

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