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The City of Nederland Accelerates Data Storage Operations With Zadara

Zadara's fully-managed enterpise storage-as-a-service solutions improve agility, support, and ease-of-use.

Summary:
The IS team at the City of Nederland, Texas, provides information services to Nederland and the neighboring cities of Port Neches and Groves.
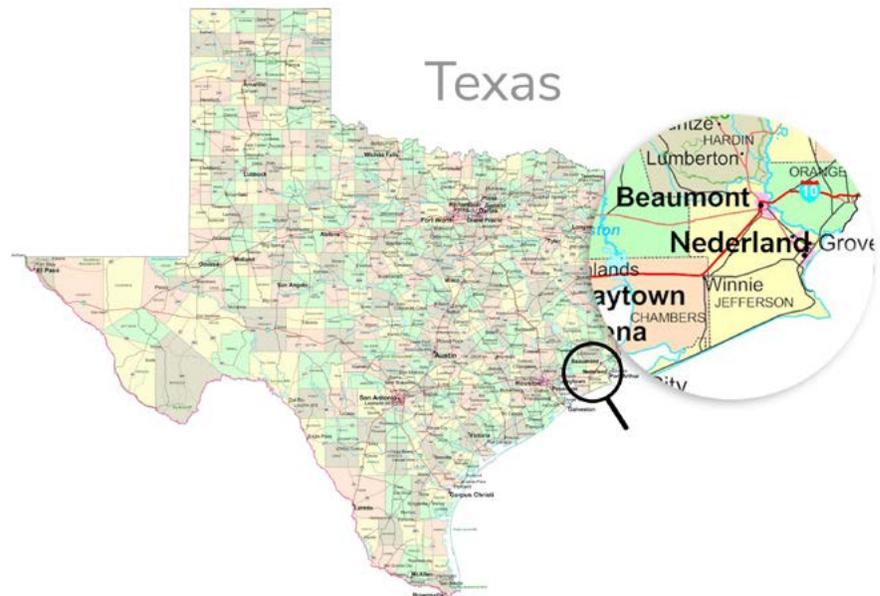
Challenges:
- Existing traditional storage array was reaching capacity limit
- Traditional strorage was inflexible, staff-intensive, and CapEx-intensive
- Federal compliance regimes for criminal justice data imposes special requirements

Solution:
- The City of Nederland adopted Zadara Enterprise Storage-as-a-Service to replace legacy traditional systems

Results:
- Fast and simple deployment enabled by fully-managed support and Zadara ease-of-use features
- Agility goals acheived with storage capacity that seamlessly scales up and down
- Storage costs are reduced, easily reported, and directly tied to specific projects

The city of Nederland, Texas, founded in 1897 on land sold to Dutch immigrants by the Kansas City Southern Railroad, is located in eastern Jefferson County, approximately 90 miles east of Houston. Since 2008, all information services, from zoning and permitting to public safety and criminal justice, for Nederland and the neighboring cities of Port Neches, and Groves are supported by Nederland IT.

As William Spell, Certified Government CIO with the responsibility of managing information services for the three cities, puts it, "When our services are down, emergency response is compromised and citizens cannot receive the services that they need and expect."

Small municipalities. Big challenges.
Providing comprehensive IT services to three cities located approximately twenty miles from the Texas coast of the Gulf of Mexico is a complex and demanding task. Weather, in particular, can pose real challenges to maintaining service availability.

"We are in an area where all kinds of weather can threaten to disrupt IT service delivery."

William Spell,
Certified Government CIO,
City of Nederland, Texas

Other key challenges for Nederlad IT include:

Compliance - Because Spell and his team provide information services for general city operations and for criminal justice applications, the Federal Bureau of Investigation audits their systems annually to ensure that criminal justice information services separated from non-criminal justice systems, as required by Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) Security Policy CJISD-ITS-DOC-08140-5.7

Staffing and training - Finding, training and retaining qualified staff is always a challenge.

Expense management - As is often the case with public sector organizations, CapEx approvers are not familiar with data storage requirements and priorities. This lack of familiarity frequently leads to long and effort-intensive CapEx approval cycles.

Support - William has found that, with other vendors, "Sometimes, being a relatively small municipal organization, when we call in, they don't always take us seriously."

Partnership addresses specific requirements.
To address these complex challenges requires a deep understanding of the environment and extensive expertise in the unique challenges of municipal information systems. Fortunately, Blue Iron Technologies brings a wealth of experience in municipal, public safety, and criminal justice IS and is focused on building long-term trusted advisor relationships.

James Johnson, president of Blue Iron, has been working closely with Spell and his team since 2008, beginning with the original project to combine the information services operations of Nederland, Port Neches, and Groves. This extended relationship allowed Johnson to quickly determine that continuing with legacy storage area network (SAN) approaches would not deliver the flexibility and simplified operation that Spell's team needed.

Initially, the City of Nederland team was interested in adopting a public-cloud approach to achieve their flexibility goals without making further major capital investments. Further investigation concluded, however, that on-premises infrastructure was still a key requirement.

Enterprise storage deployed on premises, in a pay-as-you-go model.
Fortunately, Blue Iron had recently started working with Zadara to deliver enterprise storage-as-a-service, both on-premises and in the cloud, and Johnson realized that, thanks to Zadara, the City of Nederland could, "have their cake and eat it too."

Specifically, Spell's team could get highly-available, on-premises enterprise storage, delivered as a fully-managed service, and provided in a pay-only-for-consumption OpEx model that eliminated the need to over-buy capacity.

Working closely with Blue Iron and City of Nederland teams, Zadara's solutions architects configured an on-premises solution that seamlessly scales capacity up or down, is very easy to use, and provides full charge-back reporting. Leveraging Zadara's patented Virtual Private Storage Array (VPSA) architecture, the solution architects ensured legal compliance by segregating criminal justice data onto dedicated VPSAs. With Zadara VPSAs, all processing, memory, and storage capacity are dedicated, ensuring predictable performance and eliminating threats of data leaks.

Extending success and improving disaster preparedness.
Spell is now working with Blue Iron to strengthen disaster recovery by replicating key data and services to a Blue Iron Technologies co-location facility located in Austin, Texas.

"We found the solution very easy to use, and this has really helped us by making it easier and faster to get staff, even those without storage backgrounds, trained up."

William Spell,
Certified Government CIO,
City of Nederland, Texas

Zadara Partner:

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