

County Reduces Costs While Expanding Data Center Capabilities



McHenry County, Illinois deploys Cisco Unified Computing System to make data center scalable and easy to use, while reducing power and cooling costs.

Executive Summary

McHenry County

- **Industry:** SLG
- **Location:** Illinois
- **Population:** 27,525

CHALLENGE

- Create scalable, virtual environment
- Reduce power and cooling costs

SOLUTION

- Virtualized existing data center
- Expanded data center capabilities through UCS

RESULTS

- Improved productivity by increasing access to data
- Reduced costs by limiting power and cooling needs in data centers
- Made data center scalable for future growth

Challenge

McHenry County, Illinois is located 50 miles northwest of Chicago, along the Wisconsin border. With a current population of 310,000, the County has experienced rapid but balanced growth over the past decade, averaging a 3-4 percent growth rate per year. McHenry County offers a variety of housing choices, a wide range of employment options, and access to many different recreational activities.

McHenry County used Hewlett Packard (HP) systems for 15 years; however, when its equipment lease was coming to an end, the County began to look at solutions to virtualize its data center. The County initially met with Cisco merely as part of its negotiations with its legacy supplier, HP. After further reviewing the Cisco Unified Computing System™ (UCS™), though, the County began to more seriously consider an alternative.

McHenry County wanted to consolidate its server environment to create a manageable, scalable, and cost-effective foundation. The consolidation project was driven by the following challenges:

- Efficient use of space in growing data center environment
- Limited IT resources and personnel to manage existing, growing infrastructure
- Need to cut exorbitant costs associated with cooling and power consumption
- Existing equipment lease at end of life and need to search for more competitive pricing

The County's goal was to provide existing services and keep up with the demand for services despite limited budgets.

Solution

Following McHenry County's network refresh in 2010, Cisco and the local vendor, System Solutions, conducted a pilot program for the County with Cisco® UCS, which showcased numerous differentiators between the current system and the potential performance with UCS. Tom Sullivan, chief information officer of McHenry County, Illinois says, "Seeing, touching, and using makes you a believer of Cisco UCS, which is ultimately why we went with the solution."

The pilot was instrumental in allowing the County to experience firsthand the power of the Cisco UCS Manager. According to the account team, if the County had not witnessed the System Solutions' pilot, it would not have executed the contract with Cisco. The pilot allowed the County to directly see the ease of Cisco UCS through its ability to reduce management costs, integrate with the existing Cisco environment, and reduce power consumption.

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Tom Sullivan
Chief Information Officer

Product List

DATA CENTER

- Cisco Unified Computing Solution

Cisco Capital® was also critical to this deal. Cisco facilitated a five-year lease, and according to the customer, made the process “relatively painless.” McHenry County is now in a good position, in terms of leveraging leasing options to cover its technology cost. Cisco Capital allowed the County to spread its technology cost over multiple years, so it would not need to approach the board every year for millions of dollars. Cisco Capital also covered over US\$400,000 worth of HP disk storage, beating HP in pricing on its own product.

“Power is a critical concern as we deploy new equipment. The newer stuff seems to require more power so you need to try to come up with it, and that is hard to do,” says Sullivan. “The Cisco UCS equipment will give us more processing power and reduce our power consumption which is a big deal for us”

Results

As a solution set, McHenry County was drawn to the ease of management, reduced cost of management, the integration with the existing Cisco environment, and reduced power consumption. Since deployment, the County has seen these benefits of Cisco UCS help employees and citizens.

One of the main benefits is that since deploying Cisco UCS, the County’s data center has experienced an overall increase in processing power while simultaneously reducing the actual power consumption, which is not a traditional outcome because new equipment typically results in more power usage.

McHenry County has reduced its power and cooling costs, which is critical in a time when state and local government budgets are particularly tight. Additionally, as demand for information technology and access to data continues to grow, the County’s data center must be able to scale as necessary, and Cisco UCS provides this capability. Finally, McHenry County has seen an increase in productivity as employees are able to access information more quickly and distribute this information to citizens faster.

For More Information

To find out more about the Cisco Unified Computing Solution, go to:
<http://www.cisco.com/go/UCS>.

