



County clerk's office keeps info flowing with 9355 UPS

Product:

Eaton® 9355 and Eaton Service

Location:

Gainesville, Fla.

Market Served:

Government

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- Dave Thomas, assistant data manager



Powering Business Worldwide

Background

Alachua County's Office of the Clerk is a complex organization that performs a wide range of record keeping, information management and financial management for the Florida county's judicial system and government, which serves a population of approximately 241,000 residents.

The 161 employees within the Office of the Clerk also support and provide information to a number of other county government agencies, relying on a complex network of proprietary IT systems to accomplish their variety of tasks.

Challenge

Imagine a judge who is presiding over a criminal case being unable to access critical documents related to the matter. Or a single parent prevented from obtaining key child support documentation from the county. Or a driver attempting to pay a traffic ticket whose effort suddenly stalls.

Those are just a sampling of the unpleasant scenarios that could potentially occur if the Office of the Clerk experienced even the slightest glitch in power.

Supported by proprietary systems that house all information related to the criminal and civil courts, as well as domestic, traffic and other key areas, the county's need for reliable, continuous clean power is paramount.

"We scan all of our documents into that system, and judges as well as clerks can pull everything right up on the screen," explains Dave Thomas, assistant data manager for the clerk's office.

"It would have a tremendous impact if we didn't have power because we wouldn't be able to provide the information to support them. It would definitely have a negative impact on courtroom proceedings, both criminal and civil. We would have to do everything manually."

Another casualty would be the county's web site, which provides a venue for the public to access a wide range of topics. "That would be down, as well," Thomas points out.

Keeping those critical systems up and running at all times is challenged by the area's frequent power anomalies, especially considering Florida's notorious distinction as the Lightning Capital of the United States.

For many years, the clerk's office relied on a Deltec uninterruptible power system (UPS) to safeguard its computing and server room equipment. The Deltec brand was purchased by Exide Electronics in 1996, and subsequently rolled into the Powerware product line, now owned and serviced by Eaton®.

"It did a really good job," Thomas says of the previous unit. "But we had outgrown that solution with our equipment and electrical requirements, and it was also past its prime."

So, when the clerk's office initiated a search for a higher capacity replacement model, it once again turned to Eaton.

Solution

The Eaton 9355 UPS proved to be an ideal fit for the requirements of the busy organization. To begin with, the double-conversion design of the three-phase unit delivers the highest level of protection against potentially devastating problems caused by unstable power. Safeguarding three server racks that contain 10 to 12 systems in each rack, as well as a number of stand-alone smaller servers, the UPS shields all devices from the most common problems including blackouts, sags, surges, spikes, brownouts, line noise, frequency variation, switching transients and harmonic distortion. Even with a complete loss of utility power, there is no delay transferring to the 9355's backup power supply.

"It allows us to do our job under adverse conditions," confirms Thomas. "Outages caused by summer storms are always a concern this time of year."

Another worry that the 9355 has eliminated for the county is the possibility of expanding loads. That's because the model features a scalable architecture that can be configured to match to a facility's existing needs, with the ability to scale from there. Organizations can then support additional servers or other equipment without having to purchase a brand new UPS. Even more, using Eaton's signature Hot Sync technology, 9355 units can be paralleled for capacity or redundancy. For example, a 30 kVA unit can expand to support loads of up to 90 kVA, with N+1 redundancy.

In the case of Alachua County, the 20 kVA 9355 model it purchased can easily expand to 30 kVA with a simple field upgrade. "We definitely have room to grow into it," Thomas confirms. "The scalability and being able to take advantage of the modularity of the system was an important consideration for us."

Also appealing to the clerk's office was the 9355's low total input harmonic distortion (THD), which remains below 5 percent without compromising overall efficiency. This enables the 9355 to provide a maximum transfer of power between source and protected load, leading to exceptional compatibility with generators. Since the clerk's office relies on a backup generator, this matchup was essential.

"That transition from UPS to power generator is definitely important," notes Thomas.

Thomas also praises the internal batteries of the 9355, which afford a substantial amount of runtime, in part made possible by sophisticated technologies that maximize the health and service life of the batteries. Eaton's exclusive ABM® technology relies on an innovative three-stage charging technique that features prolonged rest periods between charge phases, as well as temperature-compensated charging, both of which optimize recharge time. Even more, with the ability to purchase additional matching Extended Battery Modules (EBMs) for the 9355, Alachua County is able to bolster its runtime, if desired — from a matter of minutes up to several hours.

"We were able to get only 10 minutes of runtime — if we were lucky — with our previous system," Thomas reports.

Service

The office of the clerk ensures the ongoing reliability and performance of its UPS system with an Eaton service plan. "It's like having insurance on your car," says Thomas. "It gives me added peace of mind that things will keep running smoothly."

When it's time for a semi-annual UPS or battery inspection, Thomas receives a reminder call from Eaton. "We tend to get so involved with other things going on, but we can always rely on the service technician to schedule a visit whenever it's time for something to be done."

"They set up the appointment and they're here when they say they will be," Thomas adds. "They have their gear ready to go, and they always have whatever they need on hand, so there's no waiting for replacement parts."

This level of professionalism is quite a contrast to some other service providers that have worked with the county over the years, according to Thomas. "There's a big difference," he acknowledges. "With some of them, you wonder how they ever managed to get the job."

Thomas is also quick to praise the level of expertise displayed by Eaton's customer service engineers. "They know what they are doing," he attests. "They always test the system and when they walk away, you feel very comfortable."

Result

Having experienced several power losses since the unit was commissioned, the county's 9355 has proven to be tried and true. "The UPS did what it was supposed to and supported the systems," Thomas reveals.

Since deploying the 9355, the office of the clerk is now able to:

- Ensure the high availability of its proprietary systems, as well as servers and other computing devices
- Expand its existing UPS solution as equipment needs evolve
- Gain sufficient battery runtime through the 9355's internal batteries or Extended Battery Modules (EBMs)
- Keep all systems up and running during a blackout until the county's generator can fully power on
- Maintain the health of its UPS with an Eaton service plan



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COR160CSS_12448
October 2010