



Eaton 9390 grows with Avalon Bay

Location:

Arlington, Va.

Segment:

Housing development

Problem:

After adding new servers to its mission-critical data center, the company was running out of capacity from its existing 9390 UPS.

Solution:

Eaton® 9390 UPS capacity upgrade

Results:

A simple firmware upgrade from an Eaton technician bolstered the 40 kVA unit to 60 kVA — without ever taking the equipment offline.

“It was extremely easy to do. The actual upgrade was seamless. All of the connected equipment remained online — that was the beauty of it.”

Jatin Shah, director of network operations

Background

Avalon Bay Communities, Inc. develops, redevelops, acquires and manages high-quality apartment communities in the high barrier-to-entry markets of the U.S., including the Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, Midwest, Pacific Northwest, and Northern and Southern California regions. The company owns or holds interests in more than 50,000 housing units nationwide. In addition, at any given time, Avalon Bay has a number of communities under construction and reconstruction.

Challenge

At the end of 2011, as Avalon Bay was in the process of upgrading its Virginia data center, the Eaton 9390 UPS tasked with safeguarding the facility’s critical equipment had reached 90 percent capacity, prompting the unit to send overload alarms.

“We had added more equipment and it was pulling more power,” explains Jatin Shah, the company’s director of network operations. “We had a bunch of projects going on simultaneously in our test and product environments. We were out of capacity.”

Had Avalon Bay selected a UPS other than the 9390 when it first deployed the unit in April 2008, the company’s capacity challenge would likely have proved both costly and cumbersome.

Instead, thanks to the scalability afforded by the Eaton unit, Avalon Bay was able to easily bolster its existing 40 kVA UPS to a 60 kVA capacity — without ever taking its mission-critical equipment offline!

Solution

When the company initially purchased the 9390 UPS three and a half years earlier, one of the most attractive features was the unit’s scalability option.



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"You don't always know when your business will change or your company expands," Shah points out. "We wanted it to be scalable so it could grow if we needed it to."

Responsible for delivering continuous, clean power and high availability to Avalon Bay's main data center — which include more than 100 servers and other mission-critical equipment — the UPS indeed was approaching its capacity limit after the company bolstered its server count.

Rather than having to purchase a new, costly UPS to support its additional equipment requirements — as would have been required by other comparable three-phase UPS solutions — Avalon Bay simply placed a call to Eaton. In January, an Eaton customer service engineer arrived on site to complete a firmware upgrade, converting the 40 kVA unit to 60 kVA in a matter of minutes — without ever taking the servers offline.

"The technician came out, hooked up a laptop to the UPS, took some readings and did the software upgrade," Shah recalls. "It literally took 5 minutes."

A day later, the director of network operations received a report from Eaton showing the 9390 now rated at 60 kVA and holding 55 percent of load — compared to the previous 90 percent.

"It was extremely easy to do," Shah confirms. "The actual upgrade was seamless. All of the connected equipment remained online — that was the beauty of it."

Even more, Avalon Bay's ability to expand didn't end with the upgrade to 60 kVA, as the unit is capable of accommodating up to 80 kVA (other larger 9390 models have the ability to scale up to 160 kVA).

"We have the capacity we need for right now," Shah says. "But since we didn't go to the full 80 kVA, if we need to upgrade another time, we still can. We like having that breathing room."

And considering the company's ongoing growth pattern, the need to undergo a second capacity expansion is "very possible," according to Shah.

"There's a lot of comfort knowing we won't have to buy another unit," he reveals.

Results

Thanks to the scalability afforded by the Eaton 9390, Avalon Bay was able to:

- Easily grow its existing UPS from 40 kVA to 60 kVA to meet the power requirements of additional servers
- Complete its capacity upgrade without ever taking its critical equipment offline
- Accommodate future growth with the ability to expand to 80 kVA if needed at a later date
- Continue delivering the highest level of available and reliability within its data center



Eaton 9390

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