

Case Study: El Paso Electric

Client Profile

El Paso Electric Company (EPE) is a medium sized integrated electric utility operating in the Rio Grande Valley in west Texas and southern New Mexico with over 347,000 customers. With approximately 1,000 employees, EPE has an installed net generation capacity of 1,500 MW including about 16% interests in the Palo Verde nuclear plant. While EPE is moderate in size when compared to many corporations, as an electric utility, the technology infrastructures are very complex incorporating real-time systems, large customer databases, multi-layered geographic information systems, communication and dispatch systems, and comprehensive facilities management systems all supporting the delivery of electricity to the customers.



- Founded in 1901
- 384,000 Customers
- 1,000 Employees
- Headquartered in El Paso, TX

This environment, coupled with the key responsibility to operate and maintain the critical electric grid infrastructures for the region, sets the stage for the need of a robust set of information system infrastructures. These infrastructures, which include hardware architecture, application system architecture, network architecture, and supporting organizational resources, need to incorporate appropriate technology, integrated design concepts, and efficient processes to meet the needs of the corporation.

CHALLENGE	SOLUTION	BENEFITS
<p>EPE needed to perform a cooperative technical examination which they could not do on their own.</p>	<p>The DYOPATH team concentrated on the methods and support of functional interfaces for core business applications.</p>	<p>EPE recieved an improved interface for their core business applications.</p>
<p>EPE needed an assessment of various aspects of the current technical environment considered to be important.</p>	<p>DYOPATH designed EPE's LAN/WAN infrastructure, server strategies and storage architecture, desktop, and more.</p>	<p>EPE now had an improved infrastrucutre, server strategy, and more. All designed by DYOPATH.</p>
<p>EPE asked DYOPATH to virtualize their server environment to reduce the physical footprint required to provide current business functions.</p>	<p>DYOPATH was asked to respond to an RFP on the data center relocation to determine if continuing to support their IT internally was cost effective.</p>	<p>EPE continued to sign on with DYOPATH determining that we are cost effective and we have supported them for over 10 years.</p>

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Executive Summary

EPE retained the services of DYOPATH to perform a cooperative technical examination and assessment of various aspects of the current technical environment considered by leadership to be of high importance and worthy of focus. Our team concentrated on the methods and support of functional interfaces for core business applications, the design of EPE's LAN/WAN infrastructure, server strategies and storage architecture, desktop and software management, and secure communications.

Upon completion of the RFP, DYOPATH was requested to respond to a full outsource RFP, which was also awarded to DYOPATH.

Upon completion of this assessment DYOPATH was awarded the contract to virtualize the EPE server environment to reduce the physical footprint required to provide current business functions while minimizing any disruptions to the current production environment. The intent of this consolidation was to reduce the physical footprint only and not change the logical infrastructure design as EPE was preparing to move their data center to a new location.

DYOPATH was asked to respond to an RFP on the data center relocation to determine if continuing to support their IT internally, hosting their services in a third party hosting facility or fully outsourcing all of IT was the most cost effective solution. Upon completion of the RFP, DYOPATH was requested to respond to a full outsource RFP, which was also awarded to DYOPATH.

End User Support

DYOPATH provides technical personal computer, laptop and software assistance to all EPE personnel. Service Desk Level I personnel located in our centralized ITIL compliant Service Desk respond to employee questions and requests for service. Software support includes operating system, word processing, email,

presentation graphics, spreadsheet, drawing, illustration, file compression, workflow management, database, networking, web browser, and industry specific Commercial off the Shelf (COTS) applications. Hardware includes workstations, thin clients, laptops, laser jet printers, cashiering workstations, PDA's, Meter Reading hand held devices, mobile dispatch devices, network routers, network switches, network hubs, production test systems and process control computers. The scope of work includes, but is not limited to:

- Coordination of IT Procurement
- EPE End User satisfaction follow-up & surveys
- EPE End User training coordination
- Product order information, price quotes and status questions
- Incident diagnosis and resolution
- Dispatching services to Level 2 and Level 3
- Coordination with EPE Facilities Services Department on moves, adds and changes of IT Assets for office relocations
- Coordination with EPE Communications, on moves, adds and changes of communication circuits
- Moves, adds and change coordination of IT Asset upgrades
- Incident coordination and escalation
- IT management reporting
- Maintaining an accurate IT Asset Management Database
- Maintaining an Incident Management Database



**Providing Accountability
for Technology**

Local/Wide Area Network (LAN/WAN) Support

DYOPATH provides full Network support for EPE's privately owned SONIC ring and all network components between the data center and the remote offices. Network support consists of both Shared Services resources and on-site support that monitors and support all EPE network devices (switches, routers, firewalls, VPN, and other network-centric appliances) 7 days per week, 24 hours per day and respond to alarms that are generated by the monitoring systems and/or network incidents that are reported to the Service Desk.

Asset Management

DYOPATH currently provides asset management services and is responsible for hand receipt control of all assets. The asset management personnel are also responsible for receiving, storing, issuing, and tracking of all computers, software and peripherals.

Server & Storage Operations

The primary server operations management responsibility at EPE is to ensure that EPE End Users are provided access to required data and applications in a timely and efficient manner. Daily responsibilities for this function include but are not limited to:

- Mail configuration and administration
- Server hardware and operating system as well as storage subsystem monitoring, Incident diagnosis and resolution
- Follow current EPE change control policies and procedures
- Server and storage configurations will meet with EPE documented disaster recovery
- Policies and procedures
- Perform server and storage capacity planning
- Work with the EPE IT governance team on planning emerging projects, scheduled maintenance or downtime and unscheduled downtime
- Operating systems, systems and security patch management

Application & DBA Support

DYOPATH provides full life cycle application and database support to EPE. The simplified application development workflow consists of the following activities:

- Open a Service Request with the Service Desk
- Prepare an estimate of the work effort
- Obtain approval from the requestor
- Perform the development work
- The work product is delivered to the requestor with documentation
- Upon successful implementation, the requestor approves the activity and closes the Service Request
- In addition to application development, DYOPATH provides maintenance support for the existing in-house developed applications as well as all COTS applications.

Security

The DYOPATH Shared Services Security team reviews Intrusion Detection/Prevention Systems and system logs and provides CISSP level security expertise. DYOPATH provides EPE access to ongoing security team involvement in strategic planning and compliance/audit reviews. The DYOPATH shared services model allows EPE to obtain top-level security expertise without the full costs of hiring this expert directly, on a full time basis.

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