

## County Protects Critical Workloads from Cyber Attacks

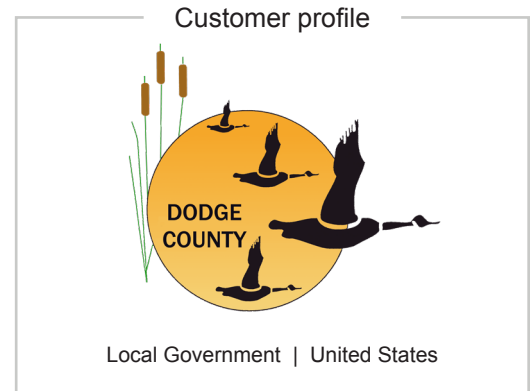


### Business needs

Dodge County sought to modernize IT with faster, more reliable backups and restores. Aware that cyber attacks have had devastating impacts on other county and city governments, they required an additional level of protection for their critical workloads that would enable them to recover from ransomware and other malicious attacks.

### Business results

- Worry-free protection from cyber threats with automated daily data transfer to an air-gapped vault
- Confidence they can recover critical data and keep their business running in the event of a cyber attack
- Easy, automated VMware backups with Avamar
- Backups complete in 1 to 1-1/4 hours, vs. 12-14 hours previously
- Heightened user trust in IT due to the reliability of Dell EMC data protection



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Network Administrator,  
Dodge County, Wisconsin

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### Solutions at a glance

- [Dell EMC PowerProtect Cyber Recovery solution](#)
- [Dell EMC PowerProtect DD series appliances](#)
- [Dell EMC Data Protection Suite](#)
- **Partner:** [VMware](#)

Dodge County, Wisconsin, is an outdoors enthusiast's paradise, with plentiful locations for water sports and hiking, and it is home to the largest freshwater cattail marsh in the United States. But like other local governments, Dodge County is responsible protecting a wide range of critical data from mishaps, natural disasters and the devastating impact of ransomware and other cyber attacks.

That responsibility is emphasized in Dodge County's information technologies vision statement: "to lead, as a top county advocate, empowering and safeguarding government operations."

## Cyber security on a shrinking budget

Says Josh Kohlhoff, Network Administrator for Dodge County, "We're aware of the ever-growing threat of cyber attacks on the county and our network. Add to that, the challenge of simply staying ahead of the game, keeping up with new technology with a shrinking budget."

Dodge County's IT environment consists of two data centers on a main campus, plus a remote data center for disaster recovery. The data that the County must keep safe and available ranges from law enforcement to Health and Human Services and vital records, email, file systems and numerous databases. To protect it all, they use Dell EMC Data Protection Suite, with Avamar writing to a Dell EMC PowerProtect DD series appliance, and Dell EMC PowerProtect Cyber Recovery Solution.

## Modernizing and automating the IT infrastructure

Recently the County ramped up on their goal of modernizing their infrastructure. One area of focus: a poorly performing Unitrends backup solution. "The pain points were continual database errors, slow backup time, slow restores," says Kohlhoff. "It was great when we first put it in, but we simply outgrew it.

"When we were exploring, looking to modernize, we had demos from Dell Technologies. We saw that Avamar has a nice, clean interface. Everything seemed to be very easily managed. Restores and backups on demand seemed easy. At the time, we were about to convert from Hyper V to VMware,



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and Avamar has a great interface for that – just set a tag in VMware and Avamar backs it up. Data Protection Suite was a very good fit for Dodge County.

“We picked PowerProtect DD because of how well it fit with Avamar. We were shown the resilience and redundancy the PowerProtect DD provided. Now, with Data Protection Suite, Avamar and PowerProtect DD, everything just fits into place and we have a reliable backup solution. We can quickly get our backups done, and also replicate to our DR location, which we could not do before.

“We went from taking upward of 12, 14 hours to back up our file share, and now it’s right around an hour and 15 minutes. Restores are quick, too. We are much, much quicker than we ever were before with our previous product and we’re extremely happy with that.

“The decrease in backup time is a huge boost to us. We’ve gone from backing up our file servers once a day to three times a day because of how fast it is. And we don’t get impacted by waiting for a backup to complete before we can restore something.” Kohlhoff cites a 100x deduplication as another improvement.

## “Nobody likes to be in the paper for a cyber breach”

According to Kohlhoff, the cyber threat landscape at Dodge County looks similar to that of other local governments in the region – and it’s ominous terrain to confront. “There have been counties and cities hit here in Wisconsin, and they’re down for days, weeks, a month,” says Kohlhoff, “and that is worrisome. If we’re down for that amount of time, there’s going to be a lot of problems.”

Dell Technologies familiarized Dodge County IT leaders with the PowerProtect Cyber Recovery solution at an executive briefing. “It was just a great fit to have that air-gapped solution for our backups.” Says Kohlhoff. “My boss, who is Director of IT, briefed our board on the impact of a cyber attack and it really opened their eyes.

“Let’s face it: Nobody likes to be in the paper for a cyber breach, and the PowerProtect Cyber Recovery solution was a great way for us to give our data another level of protection. We felt that with the Cyber Recovery solution, we would have that layer of protection that a lot of organizations probably do not.

“The assets we’re protecting with our Cyber Recovery solution are a range of critical workloads. We’re more resilient. If we got hit with ransomware or a cyber attack, we’re comfortable that we could restore from the vault.”

## Automated data protection and ransomware detection mean no worries

“Every day our critical data is automatically transferred to the vault” says Kohlhoff. “There’s not a lot of hands-on work on our part. The Cyber Recovery solution just does its job and we don’t have to worry about it. We get notification that it’s worked. And that’s great. It’s a good feeling to have.

“Dodge County also uses CyberSense to actively search for malicious content within our backups. We’ll use it as yet another level of security for our data.”

CyberSense integrates with Cyber Recovery, providing analytics, machine learning, and forensic tools to detect signs of data corruption due to ransomware with 99.5% confidence.

“CyberSense just fit in so well with the Cyber Recovery solution as a whole,” says Kohlhoff. “The CyberSense reports are checked daily. I look for green and red; if no red, we are good to go. The ability to check for anomalies without having to inflate the backups was huge!”

CyberSense provides forensic reports to diagnose the cyber attack so that an IT department can do an audit of their files to determine when the attack began and recover with the last good version of the data before there is any interruption to the business.

“The machine learning capabilities of CyberSense were very important to us,” says Kohlhoff. “We are now very confident that our backups are safe.”

## A fitting solution for digital trust

“We found that Dell Technologies has very reliable products while also being very affordable,” says Kohlhoff. “We compared them with other products in the industry and overall Dell was a very good fit for Dodge County. Everything works well together. I think our user community has a greatly increased level of confidence in our department because of Data Protection Suite, the Cyber Recovery solution and everything we’ve put in from Dell.”



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