



1ST SECURITY BANK

CASE STUDY: 1st Security Bank of Washington Transforms Data Center Operations with Dell EMC VxRail

About 1st Security Bank

Founded in 1936 and based in Mountlake Terrace, Washington, 1st Security Bank of Washington serves customers from 29 Retail Branches and Home Lending locations across the state.

The Challenge

To keep pace with an ever-evolving banking landscape, 1st Security Bank recently underwent a data center refresh and modernization to simplify the environment and reduce costs while accelerating its introduction to cloud-based services. The Bank took a Hyper-converged Infrastructure (HCI) approach that consolidated storage, compute, and networking to gain the scalability, flexibility, and efficiency of a public cloud data center with control and security of an on-premises solution.

Marshall Green, IT Systems Administration and Engineering Manager, AVP for 1st Security Bank of Washington, had some thoughts on what prompted the change. *“Due to an aging SAN infrastructure heading towards its end of life, it was time to re-evaluate our infrastructure topology in our primary datacenters,”* Marshall said.

The Solution

1st Security Bank selected VxRail, powered by Dell Technologies PowerEdge server platforms and VxRail HCI System Software, to modernize its data center. VxRail's best-in-class hardware and software-defined architecture provides secure, dependable, next-generation technology designed to future proof the Bank's data center infrastructure and seamlessly integrate with its broader VMware vSphere ecosystem. VxRail features minimize risks and simplify management with automated upgrades, actionable insights for optimizing infrastructure operations, and a single point of support for the Bank's data center software and hardware.

“1st Security Bank of Washington always uses a ‘best idea wins’ methodology when making changes, so when evaluating replacements for our SAN infrastructure, the VxRail solution stood out as the Bank's best option,” Marshall pointed out.

The Bank worked with Dell EMC and Cerium Networks to design and implement VxRail solutions for their Production and disaster recovery (DR) sites. Cerium's turnkey professional services quickly completed the implementation and migration with zero downtime and minimal disruptions to users and customers. VxRail's efficient, compact footprint made it ideal for the rack space in the Bank's data center. Dell's latest 10GbE Dell PowerSwitch Data Center Switches were installed to help deliver low latency, superb performance, and high-density storage. Dell's RecoverPoint for VMs was deployed to provide full replication of virtual machines between the Production and DR sites, with orchestration and automation built in to significantly reduce Recovery Point Objectives (RPO) and Recovery Time Objectives (RTO) in a disaster scenario.

Marshall described his experience working with the Cerium Pro Services Team, *“Partnering with Cerium on the design and deployment of the VxRail solution at both datacenters was smooth and painless. Cerium acted more like an extension of our IT Department rather than a normal vendor relationship. Any time we had questions, our contacts at Cerium were quick to respond with help.”*

Results

VxRail integrated seamlessly into 1st Security Bank of Washington’s existing workflows providing consistent, predictable performance for its mission-critical applications. With VxRail powering its Production and DR sites, the Bank is confident it can recover anything from a single application failure to a full data center shutdown. With full replication between its two sites and replication completely managed within the vSphere Web Interface, the Bank can fail over to the other site with complete orchestration in very little time if either of their sites has a disaster.

The familiar vSphere administration experience is much simpler than managing three separate technologies. Full Lifecycle Management is automated with VxRail, and upgrades to the Bank’s data center infrastructure require no downtime. In the unlikely event issues arise with VxRail, it is backed by Dell Technologies’ world-class support with a single point of contact for both hardware and software.

Asked about the benefits of the upgrade, Marshall noted, *“The most tangible result from the move to VxRail has been the overall management of the solution. Our prior typical SAN / Server topology felt like an entire project each time we needed to update while the VxRail updates the entire infrastructure with very little interaction from our IT Team.”*

With VxRail, the Bank can add capacity and performance without making big technology investments or performing the extensive up-front planning required to scale traditional data centers. VxRail enables the data center to operate more efficiently, improving the Bank’s return on its technology investments, while its simplified, streamlined management frees up the Bank’s IT team to innovate and focus on responding quickly to changes in the business landscape.

Marshall reflected on the results, *“1st Security Bank of Washington has been a growing bank ever since I started here in 2015. The move to VxRail has allowed our IT Department to keep up with this growth through events like our Merger with Anchor Bank in 2018. Because the VxRail system is easily scaled, we know we will be able to expand our storage and compute and have plenty of headroom from the initial design completed with Dell EMC and Cerium.”*

“The most surprising result of the whole project was the lack of unexpected results. Making big changes like infrastructure changes in IT usually comes with endless hurdles and caveats. Whether it was all of the planning ahead of time with Cerium or just the ease of the VxRail system, we ran into almost zero issues during deployment and migration. To me, the goal of any migration is for employees not even to know something happened; I was surprised when we were able to move our entire VM infrastructure without any employees noticing a change,” Marshall concluded.