

**The Organization**

Fulton County Government
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The Challenge

- Support for Windows 7 with 64-bit secure remote access

The SonicWALL Solution

- SonicWALL Aventail E-Class SRA EX7000

The Results

- Disaster preparedness during unanticipated snowstorm
- Secure remote access for Windows 7 users
- Lower total cost of ownership
- Greater ease of use

With nearly a million residents, Fulton County is the most populous county in the state of Georgia and the principal county of the Atlanta metropolitan area. The County employs 5,800 government employees, including approximately 140 IT staff members. Many of the County's 42 departments, such as the police, fire, and health departments, require unique specialized applications. The ability to reach critical applications remotely and from the field is crucial to public service and safety, particularly in unexpected disaster and severe weather scenarios.

The challenge: support for Windows 7 with 64-bit secure remote access

Previously, the County deployed Cisco® VPN 3000 appliances, as well as Citrix GoToMyPC® licenses to provide secure remote access. With the launch of Windows® 7, the County required a 64-bit secure remote access solution which Cisco did not provide at that time.

"It was also a matter of security best practice," stated Jay Terrell, CTO at Fulton County Government. "We felt Cisco gave too much access to users who didn't need it, and GoToMyPC could be used from any unsecured device with a web connection."

Fulton County Government was particularly interested in a solution that could provide comprehensive endpoint controls, as well as provide secure web portal access that would eliminate the need to deploy and manage fat clients at remote endpoints.

"SonicWALL® turned out to be the best game in town," said Keith Dickie, assistant director of IT at Fulton County Government. "I was really blown away with its features and ease of configuration."

The IT team selected a SonicWALL Aventail E-Class Secure Remote Access (SRA) EX7000 solution.

The solution: SonicWALL Aventail E-Class SRA EX7000

The SRA EX7000 is a clientless SSL VPN solution that delivers secure, easy-to-manage remote access control to enterprises that support hundreds or thousands of internal and external users that need to ensure anytime access to critical applications. The SRA EX7000 supports up to 5,000 concurrent users from a single appliance and also supports up to eight nodes configured behind an external load balancer.

"We let the appliance check against our definitions to determine whether the endpoints have proper security protection," explained Dickie.

The County deployed three SRA EX7000 appliances, with a pair clustered for High Availability (HA) at the main data center, and another appliance at a remote co-location to host SonicWALL Aventail Spike License accounts. The SonicWALL Aventail Spike License Pack is an add-on license that enables enterprises to increase remote user counts to hundreds or even thousands of additional users.

Fulton County Government Case Study

"The snowstorm was a real wake-up call. If we hadn't deployed SonicWALL, critical County departments would have been shut down. Quite frankly, SonicWALL saved the day."

– Jay Terrell
CTO
Fulton County Government

SonicWALL Benefits

- User-friendly web-portal access
- Granular endpoint controls
- Secure desktop virtual encrypted environment
- Access to legacy applications by authenticating against licenses on a separate server

"It was a drama-free implementation, with a minimal learning curve," acknowledged Terrell. "I was surprised by how well the EX7000 worked on first pass and went seamlessly into production."

IT decided to integrate authentication with Active Directory, using a single realm for the entire County, then direct users to appropriate portal screens based upon their AD community membership.

"Each department has their own shared drive that they access if they log into their desktop," said Vette Jackson, manager, network security team. "We also have that on their clients and it's restricted to users in those departments."

The result: lower TCO, greater ease-of-use and disaster preparedness

The solution immediately enabled the County to provide its Windows 7 users with 64-bit secure remote access. In addition, the County has seen a direct impact on total cost of ownership.

"We used to staff people on-site in the data center 24/7," reflected Terrell. "SonicWALL has helped us considerably move towards a lights-out environment and reduce staff hours."

The County has been very satisfied with the endpoint control functionality.

"With the Cisco VPN, the only way we could control where someone went was by creating specific filters," noted Dickie, "but with SonicWALL, we can validate whether they have a proper client, whether their definition is up to date or whether they have an approved anti-virus."

The solution enables remote access to the County's legacy mainframe applications by allowing authentication against licenses hosted on a separate server.

"The other VPN solutions couldn't do that for us," confirmed Dickie. He is also very satisfied with the solution's HA clustering. "It gives me a real warm and fuzzy feeling knowing that even if I can't get into the building for some reason, I can still access all our network resources."

The value of that capability was particularly evident when the County suffered a severe winter storm right as County payroll was to be processed.

"The snowstorm was a real wake-up call," exclaimed Terrell. "If we hadn't deployed SonicWALL, critical County departments would have been shut down. Quite frankly, SonicWALL saved the day."

IT plans to extend their disaster recovery strategy by using secure remote access to support all systems in production.

"We are completely configured and ready to go with all 2,000 licenses," reported Namarr Strickland, assistant director of IT and chief information security officer at Fulton County. "Based on our success with the solution, we plan to extend the Aventail platform to support all 5,800 employees."

In addition, the County plans to deploy SonicWALL Aventail Secure Desktop, part of SonicWALL Aventail Advanced End Point Control™ (EPC™), to secure traveling county workers using airport kiosks by creating a virtual encrypted environment that prevents sensitive information from being left behind.

"We see the SonicWALL Aventail solution as a seamless, all-around implementation," affirmed Dickie. "That type of strength is what really attracted me to the product."

SonicWALL's line-up of dynamic security solutions



NETWORK
SECURITY



SECURE
REMOTE ACCESS



WEB AND E-MAIL
SECURITY



BACKUP
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POLICY AND
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