Barona Resort & Casino

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SOLUTIONS

Testimonial

"If people really value their data and they really value being able to work, there's a big plus to being able to get back online very quickly after a shutdown."

- Cyndi Denny, gaming systems administrator at Barona

Critical Issue

Casino operations use information systems 24x7. Gaming could continue for a few hours in manual mode, but if a system shutdown lasted any longer than that, casino operations would have to stop.

Each hour that play is halted would result in considerable lost revenue. That revenue provides members of the Barona tribe and their non-tribal spouses and dependents with significant benefits, including, among others, improved education opportunities and 100 percent medical, dental and vision insurance coverage. Thus, protecting the availability of the systems that run the resort and casino operations is essential.

Business Challenge

Wildfires are a regular threat in Southern California during the summer and autumn months. This risk raises obvious business continuity concerns for organizations in the area.

If a wildfire were to shut down Barona Resort & Casino's systems, casino operations would be severely affected. Set in the midst of natural beauty on a large property near San Diego, the casino needed a way to protect its systems from downtime due to a wildfire, and any other cause.

"If we lose the system, that's pretty much it," declared Cyndi Denny, gaming systems administrator at Barona. "Guests can't use their points. We can't track patrons. They can play the slots, but they're not going to be able to download from their accounts. They're not going to be able to send their credits to their accounts. And for us to have to manually process that, we'd be dead in the water."

Business Profile

Company Name:
Barona Resort & Casino

Headquarters:
Lakeside, California, USA

Industry:
Gaming

Business Size:
Located 30 minutes east of downtown San Diego, California, Barona Resort & Casino includes a 400-room hotel, 11 restaurants, a golf course, a spa, 2,000 slot and video poker machines and 70 gaming tables. For the second year in a row, J.D. Powers and Associates ranked Barona Resort & Casino as offering the "Highest in Satisfaction in the Southern California Indian Casino Gaming Experience."

Business Environment:
• Casino and resort.

• Key systems include casino management, hotel management, human resources and payroll.

• Tribal gaming law requires that all systems be located on the Barona tribe's property.

Vision Solutions Product:
iTERA Availability

Implementation Team:
Vision Solutions

Solution

Barona maintains two Power System 525 servers and mirrors them using iTERA Availability.

One system is located in a secure room beneath the casino. Barona operates under tribal gaming laws that do not allow the casino to locate its second system off the Barona Band of Mission Indians' land. However, the building housing the second system is located on the opposite end of the property, thereby reducing the chance that a fire or other disaster will affect both locations.

In most years, the greatest fire threat is generally seen in October. Therefore, each September, Barona takes steps to protect against this risk. Because the casino is the most defensible position, if necessary, Barona performs a role swap to move operations to the system located there.

During the last major wildfire, Barona had to shut down power to some buildings on the property. Because operations had already been switched to the system under the casino, which has a backup generator and is better protected from fires, operations never stopped.

Power to the outbuilding, on the other hand, was turned off due to the fire. As a result, the second system was shut down. During that time, replication was, obviously, stopped. When power was restored to the outbuilding, the second system was restarted and iTERA Availability automatically resynchronized the two systems.

iTERA Availability has already tangibly proven its value several times over. Just last year, the casino had to perform three emergency role swaps between the production and backup systems.

Despite Barona having several custom-built system interfaces that have to be manually shut down during the switchover process, the casino's systems were fully operational again in less than three hours after the production system went down—which was under the limit that the casino can operate in manual mode. Consequently, casino operations did not experience any downtime.

Denny estimates that an organization with fewer complex interfaces should be able to complete a role swap in well under 30 minutes, and possibly in as little as 10 or 20 minutes.

Talking about the value Barona receives from iTERA Availability, Denny said, "During all three system recoveries we were able to reliably switch to the target box. Each time we did that, iTERA more than paid for itself."

Results

- Barona transparently maintains fully redundant systems for backup purposes.
- Recovery times have been greatly reduced.
- Emergency role swaps have all been performed reliably.
- iTERA Availability requires virtually no day-to-day management.

Technologies

- iTERA Availability
- 2 IBM Power Systems Servers running IBM i (one primary, one backup)

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