

McHENRY COUNTY

McHenry County lies fifty miles to the northwest of Chicago and incorporates amongst its numerous operations an Emergency Telephone System Board (ETSB) and 911 service. This service co-ordinates the seven different agencies across the county who respond to emergency calls, including 26 different Police Departments and 17 Fire Departments county-wide who respond to, log and then react to critical situations on a 24/7 basis.



THE BUSINESS NEED

For an operation as vital to the preservation of human life and both commercial and personal property, the ETSB has a clear demand for around-the-clock availability of its systems. Delivering further pressure are the county's requirements that the information collected and stored must be accurate and securely archived. The integrity of both live and back-up data is therefore crucial to an operation of this kind. While the ETSB had experienced no serious outages in recent years and found existing tape back-up procedures were providing an adequate data storage system, it became apparent that with the continually growing volume of information being captured, a single IBM i5 Server would not provide the level of data security that the county would require moving forward.

With this increased pressure on the McHenry County system, and the ETSB in particular, it was decided that a second i5 machine was needed to ensure that a parallel database could be operating at all times and, in doing so, maintain continuity of operations with no loss of critical data.

THE DECISION

Via the recommendation of the county's major application software provider, the ETSB opted for the *noMAX solution to run on two i5s. While other software replication vendors were considered, the affordability, scalability, ease-of-installation and deployment that a *noMAX solution offered ensured that it was given the green light to take on the serious task of preserving ETSB data and ensuring high availability of its IT systems.

THE OUTCOME

Theresa Carlson, who was tasked with overseeing the *noMAX implementation within McHenry County, said that the process was quick, straight-forward and well supported, both on-site and remotely by Mr Matt Staddler, a certified *noMAX representative. Dealing with emergency service personnel who 'found it difficult to stay off the system,' Theresa notes, required that a water-tight and systematic procedure existed to ensure that the implementation was as ideal as possible. "I needed the process to be fool-proof which is exactly what was delivered. Beyond this it was the actual outcome that was even more impressive. With *noMAX deployed, our role swap took only 12 minutes to complete. By any measure - that was impressive.' she says.

The *noMAX solution has passed a raft of rigorous testing – including shutting the system down without warning to allow the back-up data base to take over. As Theresa wryly comments, 'when an emergency comes there won't be any warning then, either.' To further ensure protection against natural or man-made disasters, the two i5s are being moved to separate locations in the county. The *noMAX solutions' ability to replicate across multi-environments also ensures this crucial security requirement is comprehensively covered.

*noMAX gives McHenry County the peace-of-mind and the confidence it needs to respond to whatever challenge may come its way. The real winners are the county's citizens who look to and expect the agencies at their disposal to be there for them in their time of need.'

Theresa Carlson
McHenry County