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## Sigma helps the City of Missouri City utilize virtualization for server consolidation, disaster recovery and a more flexible infrastructure.

The City of Missouri City, Texas, works hard to provide high-quality services while keeping costs low. Information technology plays a key role in these efforts. The city relies upon its IT infrastructure to support its operations and deliver information and electronic services to nearly 70,000 residents. Yet over time the city's data centers had become filled with aging and underutilized servers that demanded time-consuming administration and management.

The "Show Me City" understood that virtualization could help trim this overhead, but needed a partner to help plan and deploy a new virtualized infrastructure. After completing an RFP process, the city selected Sigma Solutions based upon its significant experience delivering robust data center solutions.

"We were looking to move to a more virtual environment with VMware in order to eliminate some of our physical servers," said Lathaniel Allen, IT Operations Manager, City of Missouri City. "We were also looking for a more robust SAN solution that would support our foreseeable storage needs. We chose Sigma based upon the references they provided and our overall comfort level with their team. After talking with them, we felt very confident that they could successfully complete this project."

### Showing the Way

Recognized as one of America's Best Places to Live by CNN/Money Magazine, the City of Missouri City is located just outside the Houston Beltway, minutes away from downtown. Sigma's Houston-based team rolled up their sleeves and provided the local expertise the city needed to turn its virtualization vision into reality.

"The Sigma team was very helpful during the planning phase. We had a general idea of what we wanted to do, but they helped us understand what our options were. We even went to their site and looked at projects they had com-

pleted for our customers,” said Allen. “They architected a solution that would achieve our goals, and then implemented everything for us.”

Sigma helped the city utilize VMware ESX to reduce 40 or 50 physical servers down to three servers running virtual machines. Sigma also implemented an EMC SAN and the VMware View desktop virtualization solution.

“Sigma’s engineer sat down with us and explained exactly what he was going to do. He didn’t expect us to know anything. He drew everything out on a whiteboard, told us how it was going to work and answered all of our questions. He even allowed my system administrator to hover over him during the implementation,” said Allen.

“He explained every step, and then left information that we could refer back to. He has been a great resource. We never felt like he was holding back information, or didn’t want to be bothered. It was like he was one of our crew, the way he interacted with us the whole time he was here. The guys wanted us to go through Sigma again for another project because the engineer was so knowledgeable and easy to work with.”

## Seeing Real Value

For its next project, the city asked Sigma to assist with a failover site for disaster recovery. Faced with a variety of natural threats — tornadoes, wildfires, hurricanes and even the occasional snowstorm — the city needed to ensure that its systems and data were protected.

“We wanted to set up a second site that replicated our primary site for redundancy,” Allen said. “We bought some additional VMware licenses and Site Recovery

Manager for automated failover. We also bought a second EMC SAN for data replication. The same Sigma engineer came out and installed everything in our second data center in City Hall. It went very smoothly.”

Allen says virtualization has exceeded the city’s expectations.

“It has cut down on power and cooling and our physical footprint. My system administrator doesn’t have as many servers to maintain, and we don’t have to worry about replacing hardware should one of those older machines fail,” he said.

“Desktop virtualization is also going well. We didn’t have much information on that, and were concerned because we have areas with different types of systems. Sigma ran with it and laid the groundwork for us to implement 30 virtual desktops during the first phase. They showed my system administrator how to set everything up and suggested some thin clients. We’re now looking at implementing another 30 licenses in our public safety area and will probably get Sigma’s help expanding this initiative in the future.”

The “Show Me City” has also been impressed with Sigma Solutions. The city now has a dedicated and experienced partner to help ensure that its IT infrastructure supports the myriad services provided by the local government.

“We haven’t had any problems with any of the systems they have implemented and installed here,” said Allen. “They’ve been very helpful in coming up with solutions and being available when we need them. They have been the best vendor we have worked with by far.”