Kansas public finance corporation keeps out ransomware with ease

Stops breaches before they impact operations

THE CHALLENGE

Facilitating long-term financing for capital projects including state agency and university projects, affordable housing and healthcare facilities, manufacturing projects, farmland and equipment are essential to the economic health of Kansas. KDFA helps by serving as a conduit finance authority efficiently accessing capital markets.

Like any organization handling sensitive projects and financial information, KDFA is highly concerned about cyberattacks. KDFA tried various antivirus solutions to protect its endpoints but was dissatisfied with various performance metrics and myriad computer issues.

KDFA then added enhanced solutions from these vendors to protect against ransomware, but they also failed to meet KDFA's expectations. In fact, KDFA was infected with ransomware six times in a six- to eight-month period, and all prior solutions lacked effective remediation tools. Even though KDFA avoided paying ransoms, clean-up and lost productivity from the six incidents cost time and resources and disrupted normal work operations for two to three days each time.

THE SOLUTION

After evaluating a range of options, KDFA replaced all existing security solutions with Bitdefender GravityZone Elite Security and Bitdefender Hypervisor Introspection (HVI).

"Bitdefender offers a strong solution with all-encompassing machine learning solutions," says Jeff Kater, KDFA's director of IT and systems architect. "The technology is smart, nimble, and adaptive. No other company offers anything that comes close to Bitdefender."

GravityZone Elite Security provides comprehensive protection for KDFA's physical laptops, Microsoft Exchange Server, file, and application servers virtualized on Citrix Hypervisor, Citrix Virtual Apps and Desktops infrastructure (VDI), and mobile devices. For added security, KDFA uses Bitdefender HVI for memory-level inspection of its Citrix Hypervisor environment.

KDFA deployed GravityZone Elite Security in just five minutes per endpoint, while previous solutions took 15-20 minutes. The finance authority also installed HVI in minutes from Bitdefender's GravityZone Control Center.

KDFA

The Kansas Development Finance Authority (KDFA) promotes economic development and prosperity for the State of Kansas by providing efficient access to capital markets through various tax-exempt and taxable debt obligations. KDFA works with public and private entities to identify financial options to fund capital projects for public and private entities.

Industry
Municipal Finance

Headquarters
Topeka, Kansas, U.S.A.

Results

- Experienced zero ransomware infections in a year
- Saved priceless information during ransomware attacks
- Cut security administration time from 50 to 10 percent

THE RESULTS

With Bitdefender GravityZone Elite Security and HVI, KDFA turned a susceptible endpoint defense into a virtually impenetrable shield. In the year since adopting Bitdefender, KDFA reported zero security breaches, including no ransomware infiltrations or stealthy malware exfiltration. Even the global WannaCry outbreak failed to break through.

"The day after WannaCry hit, I got an email from Bitdefender encouraging me to enjoy my weekend and assuring us we were protected from day zero," recalls Kater. "It immediately made me smile and gave me a feeling of assurance. I've never worked with a vendor that cares so much about you and your workload."

By keeping its endpoints free of ransomware, KDFA avoids costly cleanups and lost productivity, helping ensure an efficient workflow. More important, it keeps KDFA productive and responsive to client requests. One of the most painful repercussions following its previous ransomware attacks was telling users that certain financial documents had been lost and needed to be recreated, potentially delaying correspondence with outside parties. Those challenges have vanished.

Another benefit of GravityZone Elite Security is its lightweight design. Scans and signature updates occur in the background without impacting endpoint performance. Similarly, HVI continuously monitors activity in-memory on Citrix Hypervisor, unmasking stealthy cyberattacks that might evade detection at the operating system level, without slowing down user activity on virtual servers.

By default, users are unaware of what's being blocked or quarantined. Using GravityZone Control Center, though, Kater can change settings with just a few mouse clicks to update policies, see what is blocked and why, and create management reports.

With Bitdefender's easy manageability, Kater now spends only 10 percent of his time focused on security, instead of 50 percent as before. That allows him to work on other important initiatives, such as redesigning KDFA's website and updating the VDI environment. Perhaps most important, his stress level is a lot lower.

"I don't have bags under my eyes anymore," he says. "I no longer worry that some breach is going to blow away user profiles, invade our file share space, and compromise our business. What Bitdefender has done with Hypervisor Introspection and GravityZone to protect our endpoints is simply unparalleled. It is revolutionary."

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Jeff Kater, Director of IT, Kansas Development Finance Authority

Bitdefender Footprint

- Bitdefender Hypervisor Introspection
- GravityZone Elite Security

IT Environment

- Citrix Virtual Apps and Desktops
- Citrix Hypervisor
- Microsoft Exchange
- Microsoft Windows

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