Springbrook

Springbrook Case Study

City of Texarkana Rebuilds with Springbrook Cloud
After Devastating Cyberattack

Working closely with Springbrook, City of Texarkana, Texas is reconstructing its core systems following a devastating ransomware attack in late 2020. City of Texarkana has chosen to rebuild in Springbrook's Cirrus Cloud Platform.

Organization: City of Texarkana, Texas

Annual budget: $111,585,870

Staff size: 6

Platform: Springbrook Cirrus Cloud

NEEDS	SOLUTIONS	BENEFITS
• Overcome ransomware attack on city's core financial and payroll systems • Need to rebuild securely and accurately • Good support and consultation	• Springbrook Cirrus Cloud	• Enterprise-level security • Hands-on support • Expert consultation • Familiar systems, workflows and reports • Remote access going forward for staff

"44% of global ransomware attacks that have taken place so far in 2020 have been aimed at municipalities," states a 2020 article in infosecurity magazine, and this grim reality is illustrated by the experiences of Texarkana, Texas.

Mirroring an alarming national trend, cyberattacks in Texas are frequent. During August 2019, 23 towns in the state had their computer systems hacked and their data held hostage in a large-scale coordinated ransomware, according to the Texas Department of Information Resources.

"We lost all our financial data," says Jodie Lee, assistant chief financial officer for Texarkana, about the cyberattack in late 2020. Months later, the city of 36,000 has made great strides in rebuilding stronger and better. In fact by implementing Springbrook's Cirrus Cloud Platform, City of Texarkana enjoyed the added benefit of being able to provide highly-secure, cloud-based remote access for employees during COVID-19 and a crippling snow storm in February 2021.

Following the cyberattack, it was clear that Texarkana had to make a change. In fact, prior to the attack the city had been preparing to move to an updated server-based version. But following the attack, the decision was made to migrate to Springbrook Cloud.

According to Lee, David Orr, the Assistant City Manager, who worked at Texarkana during 2011 and helped with the original conversion to Springbrook, was involved in this decision "from the start and was very well informed by Springbrook about the security of the cloud platform."

"We felt the [cloud] platform would be more secure," says Lee, explaining that this decision to move from server to cloud-based occurred after the cyber incident.

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We're very lucky."

Springbrook Enterprise

Rebuilding from reports

Texarkana currently uses Springbrook's AP, AR, bank reconciliation, cash receipts, clearinghouse, general ledger, HR, licenses and permits, payroll, project management, and purchase orders modules.

The agency utilized reports from the various modules and reports that had been sent to the scheduler, to facilitate the rebuilding process. According to Lee, the reports leave a wonderful trail, "in that every report that anyone printed or even print previewed is in order of when they ran them. We're very lucky."

The rebuilding process began with payroll. Specifically, the agency created Excel versions of the old reports and imported them into Springbrook Cirrus Cloud.

"We originally pulled in the employee records, and then we added on to that," explains Lee. Additions include deductions, benefits and pay information. "We had to go pay-run by pay-run, and once we got caught up, we were finally able to go live."

As the city payroll went live, it had to build in any changes between when the system went down and when it returned to live payroll processing.

The live, cloud-based version of payroll launched in April 2021. Members of the Finance department, along with HR staff, handled the process. "Each person who has expertise [in a module] is building it back," Lee says.

With payroll complete, the accounts payable and cash receipts modules were brought back up, and this approach has been replicated for the other modules too. Lee and Texarkana's CFO are responsible for coordinating and reviewing the work.

While Texarkana is back on its feet operationally, it is still working to regenerate its 2020 financial data, since its systems were hit before the annual audit. The last module to be resurrected will be licensing and permits. Lee hopes to be fully restored, with historical information, within a few months.
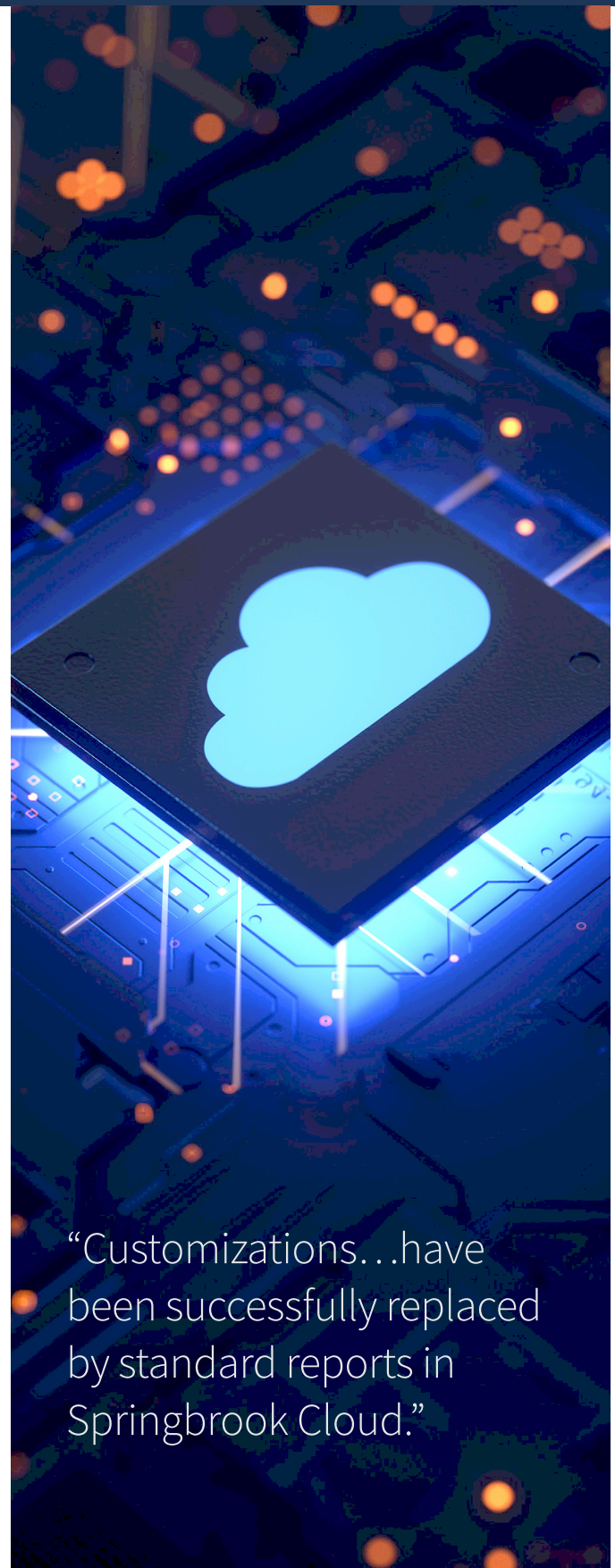
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Springbrook
Enterprise

Cloud and Remote Access

As if suffering a cyberattack and dealing with the rebuilding aftermath weren't tough enough, Texarkana—like every other agency in the nation—has had to adapt its procedures due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Even before the cyber incident, "we scheduled the department to work in shifts, separated from each other," says Lee about the safety measures, adding that last year only a few of the employees had VPNs.

"Now, with the cloud, anyone [with permission] can access [the system securely], if needed," Lee continues.

The cloud also proved very helpful in February 2021, when Texarkana experienced a one-week-long snow storm that resulted in 126 counties in Texas being declared a disaster, according to FEMA.

How is the cloud compared to the server-based version the city used for years? Lee says she hasn't noticed any huge difference and hasn't experienced a learning curve. Plus she says any customizations used in the old server version have been successfully replaced by standard reports available in Springbrook Cirrus Cloud. "It's nice not having to learn a whole new system," she says.

"If your government organization is responsible for citizen and consumer privacy-related data, you have a higher level of responsibility to your constituents. Citizens can make a choice about providing personal information to public places where they shop and visit. They don't have the same choice about providing personal information to government. Those government organizations should have no higher priority than allocating all the cybersecurity controls and qualified people necessary to protect that information."

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For information on Springbrook's powerful and secure Cirrus Cloud Financial Platform, contact us: 866-777-0069 or through our website here