

CaseStudy

Powering Up Security: Erwin Utilities' Cybersecurity Journey



AT A GLANCE

Erwin Utilities, a provider of power, water, and fiber broadband in Erwin, Tennessee, has significantly fortified its cybersecurity defenses through ZCorum's suite of managed cybersecurity services, including Security Operations Center as a Service (SOCaaS), Endpoint Detection and Response (EDR), Managed Deception, Web Filtering and Patch Management. The partnership provides Erwin Utilities with round-the-clock monitoring and threat detection capabilities, which will safeguard critical utility and broadband assets while ensuring compliance with new cybersecurity insurance requirements.

A Comprehensive Cybersecurity Strategy: Erwin Utilities' Partnership with ZCorum

INTRODUCTION

Erwin is a small town nestled in the Appalachian Mountains in the northeastern part of Tennessee. The community has a close-knit atmosphere and celebrates its heritage with many annual events. For almost eighty years, Erwin Utilities has been delivering electricity, water and other essential services to the Erwin community. In 2014 the utility began the journey to deliver fiber internet services to the area and connected its first fiber customer in 2015.

THE CHALLENGE

As the internet world expanded, so too did the plague of hackers and potential security breaches, posing significant challenges for internet providers. Like other broadband operators, Erwin Utilities had to continuously be on alert to protect their network and customers.

Robust cybersecurity was already crucial for broadband operators to ensure protection against cyber threats, but now documenting and implementing a cybersecurity plan is also required to maintain compliance with cybersecurity insurance mandates. Erwin Utilities wanted to enhance its internet security to safeguard its networks and customers, while also ensuring compliance for insurance purposes. In 2023 the utility embarked on a thorough search and evaluation process to identify the most suitable cybersecurity partners.

THE SOLUTION

After a comprehensive evaluation of multiple solutions, Erwin Utilities selected ZCorum's CyberZCurity offering, including a fully-managed Security Operations Center as a Service (SOCaaS) and Endpoint Detection and Response (EDR). ZCorum's suite of managed, cloud-based cybersecurity services immediately provided Erwin Utilities with the technology and human resources they were looking for.

The first order of business was for ZCorum to conduct risk assessments and security audits to identify vulnerabilities and understand potential threats and weaknesses to ensure that appropriate safeguards would be put in place for Erwin Utilities' systems. Next, a solution was proposed to fortify the utility's security posture where needed.

To address these challenges, Erwin Utilities implemented a comprehensive cybersecurity strategy, incorporating advanced threat detection and response systems, regular security audits, and employee training programs. With ZCorum's SOC as a service Erwin Utilities received continuous monitoring and real-time threat detection which is a crucial step to safeguard their networks against increasingly sophisticated cyber attacks.

This proactive approach includes rapid incident response and mitigation, reducing potential downtime, ensuring the reliability of services for Erwin Utilities' subscribers, and protecting the company's reputation. Additionally, the SOC helps meet regulatory and industry best practices, while maintaining compliance with cybersecurity insurance mandates.

"The SOCaaS was a big deal for us. While we already had good cybersecurity practices in place, we're a small utility and we all wear a lot of hats. We didn't have the capacity to set up a 24x7 monitoring center. This takes us to a whole new level."

*John Fredericks,
Director of Erwin Fiber and IT*

Erwin Utilities also found that ZCorum's managed security solutions gave them a seamless, cost-effective path to significantly upgrade their cybersecurity defenses without the need for a substantial in-house investment in technology and human resources.

THE RESULTS

By staying ahead of emerging threats and adhering to stringent regulatory standards, Erwin Utilities not only protected its own infrastructure, but the company's proactive approach to cybersecurity demonstrated its commitment to providing reliable and secure internet services and building trust with its customers. The 24x7 Security Operations Center as a Service (SOCaaS) and managed EDR solution now provide round-the-clock monitoring and threat detection capabilities, further strengthening Erwin Utilities' security posture.

On the matter of business insurance requirements, providers are encouraged to obtain cyber insurance policies that specifically cover various cyber risks, including data breaches, ransomware attacks, and business interruption caused by cyber incidents. These policies provide financial protection and support in the event of a cyber attack. Insurers expect businesses to comply with cybersecurity regulations to minimize legal risks and ensure comprehensive data protection.

By meeting these requirements with ZCorum's cybersecurity solution, Erwin Utilities not only enhanced their cybersecurity posture but could also be eligible for better insurance coverage and potentially lower premiums.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Erwin Utilities found ZCorum to be the clear choice among the cybersecurity solution contenders evaluated, citing the comprehensive offering, as well as the expertise and professionalism exhibited by the ZCorum team. Thanks to ZCorum, Erwin Utilities is now well-positioned to safeguard its mission-critical assets and customer data against cyber threats.

ZCorum is the leading provider of innovative diagnostics and managed broadband solutions to telecommunications companies, helping them reduce costs, increase operational efficiency and improve the subscriber experience. For more information on our cybersecurity solution, visit ZCorum.com/solutions/cybersecurity/.



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