

Success Story: Elgin Community College



Eaton UPSs Make the Grade at Elgin Community College

Product:

Eaton 9125 and 9170+ UPSs

Location:

Fox River Valley, Ill.

Markets Served:

The college community

"When we asked for references for Eaton, they came very highly recommended based on their product and support services."

— Michael Chahino, director of network operations and information security for ECC

Background

Located in Illinois' Fox River Valley between Chicago and Rockford, Elgin Community College (ECC) meets the higher education needs of nearly 17,000 students each year. The 145-acre commuter campus offers a wide variety of learning opportunities—from the ability to earn an associate's degree, to providing the undergraduate courses required to transfer to a four-year university, to offering specialized career and technical programs.

As an institution that is committed to enhancing learning through the use of technology, ECC not only relies on computer-based instruction throughout its curriculum, but boasts a complex of ultra-modern buildings infused with state-of-the-art equipment.

Challenge

In keeping with its desire to deploy cutting-edge technology solutions, ECC recently upgraded its phone system to a Voice-over-Internet-Protocol (VoIP) solution. In conjunction with the new communications equipment, the college sought to implement a power protection strategy that would not only safeguard the system against the area's frequent power anomalies, but would also ensure that phones remain up and running for at least 90 minutes in the event of a prolonged outage.

Another requirement was an uninterruptible power system (UPS) compact enough to fit into the small data closets where the phone systems are housed.

At the same time, Elgin Community College was struggling with reliability and service issues with its two larger UPSs, which were responsible for protecting servers, firewalls and the primary core switch within the campus' main data center. ECC sought to upgrade the aging units in order to ensure high availability and uptime for its critical equipment.

Solution

To flesh out the power protection solution that would best meet its needs, Elgin solicited proposals from several UPS vendors. But one product quickly emerged as a standout among the manufacturers: the Eaton® 9125 Rackmount UPS from Eaton's Powerware® series.

Indeed, the compact UPS—which conserves valuable rack space by delivering up to 3000 VA of UPS power in only two rack units (2U), or up to 6000 VA in 5U—protects critical applications from downtime and data loss by providing continuous, conditioned power to all connected equipment.

Not only was the UPS an ideal fit for Elgin's VoIP application, the college also realized a high degree of comfort from Eaton's reputation as a leader in the power quality industry.

"When we asked for references for Eaton, they came very highly recommended based on their products and support services," notes Michael Chahino, director of network operations and information security for ECC.

Impressed by both the UPS system and the manufacturer, Chahino opted to deploy 16 of the 3000 VA 9125 units, and 14 of the 6000 VA units. Relying on its double-conversion design,

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the 9125 safeguards the college's equipment by constantly conditioning AC output, assuring zero delay when transferring to backup power in the event of a utility power failure.

Of key importance to ECC was the 9125's ability to provide additional battery runtime through optional extended battery modules (EBMs). Having attached an EBM to each UPS, the college can rest assured that its phone system will continue to operate for at least 90 minutes in the event of a power outage.

In fact, the solution's capabilities were already put to the test when a major blackout wiped out power to the entire campus.

"We were unable to bring up our co-generator," explains Bud Miedema, ECC's telecommunications technician, "but those 9125s stayed up and running for the full hour-and-a-half."

Another benefit of the 9125 is the unit's load segment control, which allows users to extend runtime for more critical equipment by managing scheduled shutdowns and sequential startups of protected loads. Furthermore, the college chose to enhance the serviceability of the units by purchasing PowerPass® power distribution modules, which provide a maintenance bypass switch to upgrade or replace the UPS without interrupting power.

In addition, ECC implemented Eaton ConnectUPS Web/SNMP devices, which allow

each UPS to directly connect to the Ethernet network and the Internet. In doing so, administrators have the ability to conveniently monitor and manage the UPSs with a standard Web browser, while simultaneously ensuring graceful shutdown for multiple computer systems over the network.

To further supplement its power protection solution, the college also purchased an Eaton Environmental Monitoring Probe (EMP) for each UPS, which enables IT administrators to remotely monitor environmental conditions within the network closets.

"Most data closets don't have their own air conditioning," Chahino explains. "In case anything happens to any of the equipment, (the EMP) will report back to us and prompt us to go make a physical check."

To address power protection within its data center, the college selected two 12 kVA Eaton 9170+ UPSs, which offer the highest level of power protection and power quality of any rackmount UPS in the 3–18 kVA range. Eliminating single point-of-failure with N+X power and logic redundancy, the unit's scalable, modular design adapts easily to changing IT environments with the ability to add power and/or battery modules.

"The units have been great," Chahino reveals. "We have had no issues at all."

Results

Overall, Elgin Community College invested approximately \$100,000 in its comprehensive power protection solution, which Chahino acknowledges is a small price to pay for the level of defense it provides, safeguarding multi-millions of dollars worth of critical equipment.

"It's another layer of security to keep the network up and running," he explains.

Since deploying the Eaton solution, Elgin Community College is able to:

- Ensure its VoIP system remains up and running even when power quality is compromised
- Provide 90 minutes of phone service during an extended outage
- Protect its critical data center equipment against power anomalies
- Easily and cost-effectively expand its data center UPSs with the scalable capacity of battery and/or power modules

Eaton Corporation
Electrical Group
8609 Six Forks Road
Raleigh, NC 27614
Toll free: 1.800.356.5794
or 919.872.3020
www.eaton.com/powerware

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