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## Rogue Valley Veterans & Community Outreach

Ricoh IT Services Meets the Needs of Community Outreach Organization

### ABOUT THE CUSTOMER

Rogue Valley Veterans & Community Outreach (RVVCO) is a non-profit organization that provides essential and emergency services to low-income individuals and families in Jackson County, Oregon. The agency relied on an out of area IT services provider when network problems arose. Unfortunately, the provider was largely unresponsive. The agency needed a new vendor for customized network solutions and faster response to help ensure its systems remained operational at all times.

### CHALLENGE

When your entire mission is to help those in need, it's important not only how you do it — but also when you do it. The staff at RVVCO has to act quickly to find housing and other available resources for people in dire situations. So, when the IT network fails, or a computer malfunctions, RVVCO needs it to be repaired quickly.

The non-profit agency has extensive files with confidential documents for hundreds of people in the community. It hired an out of area IT services provider to manage its network, so electronic files remained secure and accessible. When an issue arose, an RVVCO staff member created a service ticket online. Then, they waited. Sometimes it took up to three days before a technician would respond.

"Waiting for hours or even days just to get a response was a significant problem," said Samantha Brix, RVVCO Executive Director. "Without access to files, we can't work. And if we're not working, there are a lot of people who aren't getting the help they desperately need."

### CHALLENGE
- Poor IT service provider response
- Onsite support dispatched to a 3rd party for an additional fee
- Operations halted while waiting for resolution
- No real time disaster recovery capabilities

### SOLUTION
- Ricoh Proactive Managed IT Services
- Collaborative approach for more customized local IT services
- Transitioned to an in-house Microsoft Exchange email server

### RESULTS
- Reduced IT services costs
- Fast, responsive, around-the-clock technical support
- Secure email server
- Significant service call process improvements

When the IT service provider finally responded, technicians tried to resolve issues remotely since the provider was located 4-½ hours away in Portland, Oregon. Sometimes, it was impossible. In these cases, a local technician from a third-party vendor was dispatched to RVVCO's office. The dispatched technicians were not included in the monthly IT services contract. Plus, the technicians were assigned at random, and their unfamiliarity with the network, office, employees and required tasks compromised speed and quality. RVVCO was overwhelmed with the expense.

"We're a non-profit agency, so our budget is limited," said Brix. "Software-related service calls were an extra charge. Plus, every time we required onsite service, a new technician would arrive and the learning curve with our operations would begin anew. All the while, we were paying exorbitant amounts for slow, unresponsive service."

Even email service, the primary way to share information for almost any organization, was down for multiple weeks as RVVCO awaited service. Staff used fax machines in the interim to distribute important documents, which was much more labor-intensive, expensive and not as secure.

Computer repairs were especially difficult. After a service ticket was created, a technician would eventually call via telephone to discuss the situation. If the problem could not be resolved, the RVVCO employee would pack the computer into a shipping box and mail it to the IT services provider. This meant RVVCO was without this computer for a minimum of three days. RVVCO was responsible for shipping costs, of course. There were even times when the agency had to purchase a new computer to maintain operations while the old one was out for repairs.

Worst of all, the IT services provider seemed to keep RVVCO in the dark deliberately. The contract forbade agency staff from accessing the server, passwords and administrative information. Plus, a new service ticket was required for every service call, even if it was a recurring problem. So instead of building toward a resolution by learning from previous actions, the IT service provider treated the same problem as an isolated incident.

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## SOLUTION

For almost a decade, RVVCO was impressed with the Ricoh digital printer it used for the lion's share of its document management tasks. So, when a Ricoh representative showed up to discuss renewing the lease, the conversation was brief. The printer was upgraded and the lease was renewed. That's when another discussion began that has improved the way RVVCO serves the community.

"We had no idea that Ricoh could help maintain our network," said Brix. "We thought they were only a hardware provider. We learned quickly that Ricoh offers comprehensive IT services. More importantly, we discovered that they were committed to providing fast, responsive and reliable network support."

Another meeting was scheduled for the next day. The Ricoh representative arrived with a Ricoh IT Services engineer to discuss the agency's primary concerns with its network. Then, Ricoh conducted assessments for the entire network, including the 12 workstations and servers. The collaborative approach enabled Ricoh to tailor services specifically for the needs of the RVVCO employees through Ricoh Proactive Managed IT Services.

RVVCO works primarily with veterans. Each of them has extensive documentation, which includes sensitive information. To protect these individuals, RVVCO wanted encryption when sharing emails with the local chapter of the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs. Ricoh advised that the organization should transition from a hosted email environment to an email exchange server because it's easier and less expensive to maintain and it doesn't compromise service quality.

"We can even check emails from home," said Brix. "We didn't ask for this capability and Ricoh didn't charge for it. The team just knew it's a necessity for running a service-based organization in today's world where everybody is connected at all times."

Ricoh also updated disaster recovery procedures for RVVCO. Previously, the team had to back up the network every week and ship it to the IT services provider. Ricoh Proactive Managed IT Services offers real-time backup that can be performed remotely.

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RVVCO and Ricoh IT Services continue to collaborate on new initiatives. For example, there are plans for a new computer lab at RVVCO headquarters to help veterans with computer training and online research for employment and other needs. It will include robust security controls to regulate content. In addition, for three transitional houses that RVVCO partners with in the community, Ricoh IT Services will help install computers and internet service in those facilities, too.

## RESULTS

Ricoh Proactive Managed IT Services offers around-the-clock service. Any RVVCO employee can call a service technician for assistance at any time. Most service calls can be resolved remotely. But, when technicians are dispatched onsite — it's part of the monthly service charge. Unlike the previous IT services provider, Ricoh manages everything, including hardware, software, onsite calls and more, quickly and economically.

"We're actually paying less money for far superior service," said Brix. "Ricoh's team is always there when we need them. And they understand and respect what we do, so they work diligently to resolve issues quickly."

Shortly after RVVCO chose Ricoh Proactive Managed IT Services, the network went down. A call was made to the Ricoh Communications, Operations & Remote Engineering (CORE) Center for IT Services and answered in about 15 seconds. The situation was resolved in less than 15 minutes. At other times, an employee has had a computer issue and has called the Ricoh CORE ITS Center directly. Every time, they've been connected with an actual technician who can walk them through troubleshooting. On one occasion, a technician was dispatched to help a single user resolve a network issue.

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