

Disaster recovery gaining importance

By GENE STOWE
Tribune Correspondent

Some companies are taking day-to-day advantage of the technology capacity they have built up for disaster relief, says Ralph Acito of Global Access Point, which recently started providing service to two large Chicago customers and Elkhart General Hospital.

Global Access operates off-site data centers, data transport and disaster recovery operations for companies at Union Station in South Bend, a hub of fiber following old railroad rights-of-way.

"We've seen quite a bit of growth," Acito said. "Some of that is in the form of a couple of substantial customers that are joining us down at Union Station out of the Chicago area.

"They are both large-sized companies that are taking a pretty substantial amount of space in our building and a pretty substantial amount of our bandwidth between here and Chicago."

The companies signed up within 30 days of each other this summer.

"We're nearing completion with the physical buildout of their equipment room," he said. "One of them has already moved into some temporary space. We also have signed up another large customer, Elkhart General Hospital. We've been talking with them for quite a while."

Elkhart General and one of the Chicago companies are using the service for disaster recovery. The other Chicago company is operating out of three locations simultaneously.

"They will actually be doing some of their production work out of the South Bend data center," Acito said. "They're actually doing it between three different locations. They currently have two. We are the third. Their first two are in the Chicago area. They wanted their third to be geographically farther away."

Some companies still consider the backup system simply a safety net for disaster recovery, an expensive investment that requires upgrading as technology changes.

"Others take the approach 'We've got all this capability over here. Why don't we use some of it in our day-to-day operations?'"

Acito said. "It makes better utilization of the money they're putting into disaster recovery. They're using that every day.

"Disaster recovery, although very important, can be very expensive."

In addition to the large users, Global Access, which has seven full-time workers and one part-time worker, has more customers who take less space and less bandwidth.

"There has been a lot of growth with the smaller customers as well," Acito said.

"I see more and more companies who are opening up to the idea their data center stuff doesn't have to be in the same building with them."

For more information on Global Access Point call (574) 472-0750 or see the Web site at www.global-access.us.



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Ralph Acito, vice president of operations for Global Access Point, is shown in the Union Station building in South Bend.

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