

# Michigan Department of Environmental Quality

## Preserving Resources With Electronic Vaulting

- CUSTOMER:** The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality  
**BUSINESS:** State Government Agency  
**CHALLENGE:** To protect critical environmental regulatory data and internal operational data, distributed across multiple servers and locations.

The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) manages a broad range of programs and regulatory activities related to land, water, waste disposal, and air quality. The DEQ must keep accurate records on all Michigan pollution sources to ensure that regulatory obligations are being met. Losing this data to a server crash or disaster would inhibit the DEQ's mission to provide a healthy environment for the people of Michigan.

With 16 locations distributed across the state, each with their own servers and data, it was extremely difficult for the agency's small IT staff to implement an agency-wide program to reliably protect its information. Because all backup was being done manually on tape, the process required the participation of multiple people across all of the locations. By definition, this made the process difficult to manage and highly susceptible to human error.

To effectively protect Michigan's environment, the DEQ needed to find a more effective way to protect its data. It needed to be able to minimize the risk of human error by automating the backup, recovery and off-site storage process across all locations. The agency found the ideal solution from the world leader in off-site data protection – Iron Mountain – with Electronic Vaulting, powered by LiveVault®.

### Sanctuary from Manual Backup Burden

Electronic Vaulting provided the automatic, fully managed backup and recovery solution that the DEQ was seeking. All changes to business critical files – such as e-mail and databases – are continuously transmitted across the Internet and securely stored off-line and off-site in an Iron Mountain vault.

Prior to adopting Electronic Vaulting, the DEQ used tape-based backup systems in each of its locations. Each location was responsible for backing up its data each night and sending tapes to the DEQ's main location. The main location would also back up its data each night and send tapes off-site.

While this manual system provided some degree of data protection, it was extremely difficult to manage and was highly prone to human error. "It was a logistical nightmare, because we were constantly moving tapes around," said Chad Zemer, Operations Manager for the DEQ. "We had the equivalent of three employees working full-time just on maintaining our backup system. One person would spend a whole day each week just erasing tapes so they could be re-used. Electronic Vaulting eliminates much of the work hours previously spent on backup, freeing up IT resources to focus on other projects."

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– Chad Zemer,  
Operations Manager,  
Michigan DEQ

### Fail-Safe Performance

The DEQ is migrating its mission critical backup and recovery operations to Electronic Vaulting. This data exists on platforms ranging from e-mail, to accounting systems, to databases that house the agency's operational data.

In addition to generating substantial resource savings for the DEQ, Electronic Vaulting has enabled Zemer and his staff to "normalize" backup and recovery processes across all locations and virtually eliminate human error exposure by replacing manual procedures with automated managed services.

"It simply was not possible for our IT staff to ensure that each of our 16 locations were performing their backups properly each night," he said. "Electronic Vaulting will eliminate all of these problems for us by backing up all of our data automatically and continuously across all of our locations. There's no need for human intervention, so there's no need to worry about human error."

Zemer noted that Electronic Vaulting's ability to continuously back up data – as opposed to "once a day" scheduled backups – was one of the primary reasons why he chose the service. "The continuous backup feature ensures my backup data is always current. I couldn't find any other vendor who offered anything like it".

