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— Christopher Barron, director of information technology, CPS Energy™, San Antonio

BRIGHT IDEA

Gateway and CPS Energy of San Antonio team up for a powerful and cost-saving solution.

The River Walk, or Paseo del Rio, in San Antonio is one of the most beautiful destinations in all of Texas. Lined with rows of shops, restaurants and pubs, the 2 1/2-mile stretch of waterfront truly comes to life at night. When the sun goes down, the River Walk lights up in a dazzling array of colors.

And like every other home or business in San Antonio, power to light the River Walk comes from CPS Energy™ — the nation's largest municipally owned energy company providing both electricity and natural gas.

Many municipal utility companies enjoy a monopoly on service delivery. However, recently passed deregulation legislation in Texas eventually could put CPS Energy in competition with other utility providers.

“The landscape for municipal utilities is changing, especially in Texas,” said CPS Energy's Director of Information Technology Christopher Barron. “In the past we were guaranteed monopoly status within our service territory. With retail electric deregulation in Texas and a newly passed energy bill, we may opt to go into open competition or be required to compete.”

Therefore, CPS Energy made a move to keep itself ahead of the pack: The company — through an intensely competitive bidding process — chose Gateway as its provider for high-powered, cost-effective desktop and notebook PCs and servers. CPS Energy, which uses 4,000 desktops and notebooks to support its operations, decided Gateway could provide the right equipment at the right price.

PLANNING AHEAD

CPS Energy had worked with Gateway for more than a decade, but most procurements were done on an as-needed basis. New laws and upcoming challenges led CPS Energy to form a more structured relationship with the company.

“Prior to last year, we'd been doing business with Gateway for about 12 years,” said Barron. “But what was different going into this year than last year is we'd always done business with Gateway on an as-needed basis. We'd go to them for servers or PCs, but we really didn't have any type of enterprise agreement.”

CUSTOMER PROFILE

AGENCY:
CPS Energy™ of San Antonio

MISSION:
Produce and deliver competitive energy products and services to meet the changing expectations of customers.

TECHNOLOGY OBJECTIVE:
Find a low-cost, high-quality technology provider to keep CPS Energy competitive in the face of an uncertain municipal utility landscape.

GATEWAY SOLUTION:
Gateway was chosen as the provider of desktop and notebook PCs and servers. In addition to providing afford-

able technology solutions, Gateway supports CPS Energy with reliable service.

ROI:
As a result of its relationship with Gateway, CPS Energy saves money by having a reliable vendor provide and service the equipment. Plus, internal customer satisfaction is higher because employees have the latest technology tools.

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800-211-4952
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To remain competitive, CPS Energy needed to ensure its IT investments provided value, performance and stability. Choosing Gateway as provider of notebook and desktop PCs and servers has helped CPS Energy remain an exceptional value for its energy customers.

The agency uses Gateway® E Series and Profile® All-in-One PCs, with Intel® Pentium® 4 processors with HT Technology¹, to meet its desktop computing requirements. Mobile users rely on Gateway® E-Series notebooks with Intel® Centrino™ Mobile Technology and Intel® Pentium® M processors.

“We needed to have a better arrangement with our technology providers,” Barron said. “Along with higher levels of service, we also need to have a predictable level of expenditures so that we can budget more accurately over a multi-year period.”

CPS Energy decided that a lease and replacement program would best suit its needs. The program is aggressive. CPS Energy leases its Gateway® desktops on a three-year cycle and its notebooks on a two-year cycle. Barron decided the company’s business needs dictated that it refresh desktop technology frequently instead of maintaining old machines.

For instance, CPS Energy’s work force includes a number of professionals who rely on sophisticated computer applications. “We have a lot of users who are in engineering areas and require top-notch technology,” said Barron. “We need to get them the best technology as soon as practical.”

INTELLIGENT PURCHASING

Under the new arrangement with Gateway, CPS Energy works with the company to predict its technology needs. That allows Gateway to offer CPS Energy better pricing.

“We’ve lowered our costs because we set expectations with Gateway that we are going to commit to purchasing a steady amount of machines.” explained Barron. “So that lowers our costs. Internally we’ve increased our customer satisfaction because people aren’t going to have to worry about working on an obsolete computing platform. Consequently our PC support costs are also starting to trend downward.”

CPS Energy, like many Gateway customers, is certified to do its own warranty work on Gateway equipment. However, Barron said he’s exploring whether Gateway might be able to perform warranty repairs more cost-effectively — yet another benefit of the new enterprise agreement.

As a municipal utility provider, Barron knows the value of delivering quality service to cus-



Gateway® Profile All-in-One Desktop PC with Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor with HT Technology¹ provides the power CPS Energy employees need to remain productive.

tomers. He’s delighted that Gateway takes equal pride in keeping CPS Energy satisfied.

“Historically they are very responsive to us in terms of our orders,” said Barron. “For example, we purchase Hitachi SANs [storage area networks] from Gateway. Sometimes we’ve had to order those on very short notice, and Gateway has really stepped up to the plate. They get those units to us sometimes in as little as five days, when ordinarily it might take over 20.”

Similar to governmental entities, CPS Energy must make wise decisions about technology investments. Gateway is seeking to prove that CPS Energy chose the right technology provider. CPS Energy acquires the latest technology at the best price, all while receiving the professionalism and customer service for which Gateway is known.

“We can’t afford frivolous investments in technology,” said Barron. “We have to be highly conscious about cost. What makes Gateway such a good provider for us is that they have the ability to work within our cost structure and give us the offerings that we need.”

That’s how Gateway and CPS Energy work together to make San Antonio shine — River Walk and all.

