

## Manufacturing and Marketing: Alon USA Big Spring Refinery

### Breece Hill Helps to Fuel Alon USA Growth

#### BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

Alon USA is a Dallas-based refining and integrated marketing enterprise that operates throughout the Southwest. In addition to owning crude oil refineries and having pipeline operations, Alon USA also owns over 1,200 Fina brand retail sites and over 160 Southwest convenience store sites. It is also one of the leading producers of asphalt in the Southwest.

The Alon USA Big Spring Refinery IT department supports 200 employees and contractors, who are primarily engaged in the product loading process. The process entails servicing gas stations from the time the station makes a request for additional fuel, loading up the fuel trucks at the refinery, and delivering the fuel to the gas stations. This process needs to be documented throughout the cycle to make sure not only that customers receive their fuel, but also that the correct amount of money is billed. "We needed to make sure all of our business data was being backed up and that we could successfully recover data on a timely basis," said Casey Pledger, Big Spring Refinery systems site advisor. "Sarbanes-Oxley requirements play a significant role in our business, as well, because specific financial data must be 100% backed up," he added.

The backup solution Pledger inherited was a combination of tape and software. The weekly backups could take 60 hours to complete, and if the backup failed, the entire process had to be re-initiated. Pledger encountered times where the weekly backups converged with each other because one backup wasn't yet complete but it was time to start another. The backup software had to be closely monitored, costing Pledger about an hour a day. "Our IT goal was to provide solid support for our employee customers and we couldn't do that on a consistent basis," Pledger said.

Pledger knew something needed to be done to improve service levels and to protect the company from the business risk of unrecoverable data. He started to investigate alternative backup solutions and found out about the Breece Hill BizGuardian backup and recovery appliance. The BizGuardian appliance provided a fully integrated disk-to-disk-to-tape (D-D-T) device, with all of the components tested and certified. Plus, it also included EMC Retrospect software, a server, disk, and tape — everything he would need for complete backup and recovery. Other solutions Pledger researched were either too costly or had too much capacity — and were designed for much larger firms.

#### KEY BUSINESS CHALLENGES

“ I almost couldn't believe how easy the BizGuardian was to install and use. All I did was take it out of the box, put it in the rack, and turn it on.

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It was that simple.

*Casey Pledger,  
systems site advisor*

- Backups were taking too long
- Software was difficult and time-consuming to maintain
- Regulatory requirements were increasing
- Off-site storage was cumbersome
- Budgets were restricted



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## BREECE HILL SOLUTION

"I almost couldn't believe how easy the BizGuardian was to install and use," Pledger said. "All I did was take it out of the box, put it in the rack, and turn it on. It was that simple," he explained. The next step was to learn how to run the Retrospect software, but that was easily accomplished through an online Retrospect video.

What used to take 60 hours is now accomplished in just three hours with the BizGuardian appliance. When using Retrospect software, there is one initial full backup, which is followed by incremental backups that back up only changed data. Typically, Big Spring Refinery uploads each day about 20 new snapshots containing only new or altered data. This saves an incredible amount of IT administrative time. The Big Spring Refinery's BizGuardian appliance can store up to four terabytes of data, which certainly handles the company's capacity requirements now and in the foreseeable future.

The Big Spring Refinery tape rotation process was also simplified, resulting in money savings with the BizGuardian appliance. The previous solution was clumsy and difficult to manage. Ten tapes were required for off-site storage with a four-week rotation. Now, Pledger manages just two off-site tapes on a weekly basis and then archives the tapes monthly. Since the number of tape drives decreased by 80%, both the cost of the additional drives and administrative time were saved.

## BUSINESS RESULTS

The BizGuardian appliance solved backup and recovery issues for Alon USA's Big Spring Refinery and achieved the following benefits:

- Decreased backup windows by 95%, going from 60 to 3 hours.
- Dramatically improved backup management processes, saving time. IT administrators can now focus on more value-add programs to improve business.
- Saved money. The number of tapes in use decreased by 80%, saving not only the cost of additional tapes, but also the time to manage multiple tapes.
- Reduced risk. Critical business data is backed up daily and complies with government regulations.

## ABOUT BREECE HILL

Breece Hill, a leader in data protection solutions for small to medium size businesses and workgroups, provides integrated data protection servers, optical technologies, autoloaders and tape libraries covering the wide variety of customer requirements. Since 1993 more than 25,000 units have been shipped worldwide. Breece Hill distributes its products through worldwide distribution, reseller and OEM channels. To learn more about Breece Hill's data protection solutions, visit [www.breecehill.com](http://www.breecehill.com).

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