



CommunityBanks Invests in Secure, Managed Network Access across Regional Branches

CommunityBanks, a subsidiary of Community Banks, Inc. (Nasdaq: CMTY), is a financial services company that operates an extensive network of banking offices and ATMs throughout central and northeastern Pennsylvania and northern Maryland. In July 2005, the company merged with Blue Ball National Bank, whose 18 branches serve the southeastern portion of Pennsylvania. Blue Ball is now a division of CommunityBanks. Currently, the combined organization operates 70 branches.

THE CHALLENGE: HIGH COST AND COMPLEXITY OF APPLICATION ACCESS FOR BRANCHES

Before Blue Ball National Bank merged with CommunityBanks, it faced the challenge of deploying and maintaining client/server applications on local servers and desktops at its 18 branch locations. Not only was it time-consuming to have IT staff travel to the branches each time a server or application upgrade was needed, but this approach also required shutting down the server for several hours, affecting the office's productivity. Tape backups had to be done on each server as well.

"To improve manageability and reduce the amount of time spent on routine maintenance and support, we wanted to consolidate servers and applications into our operations center," said Jeff Lyons, IT Department system administrator. "We also planned to move to the Windows server platform and felt a centralized infrastructure would simplify that process."

In addition to reducing costs through server consolidation, the IT team hoped to save money by extending the existing three-year replacement cycle for its 300 desktops with thin-client devices. Finally, like other financial institutions, Blue Ball was concerned about data security and compliance with the Sarbanes-Oxley Act and other regulations. "We were looking for a way to lock down the

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CommunityBanks

Key Benefits

- Enabled server consolidation for easier IT administration
- Reduced desktop management costs
- Supported upgrade to cost-effective thin-client devices
- Provided secure, remote access to mobile and home-based users
- Provided foundation for regulatory compliance and business continuity

desktop to prevent introduction of threats and viruses, and also to simplify deployment of security patches, anti-virus software and other preventive measures,” said Lyons.

IMPLEMENTING THE CITRIX ACCESS SUITE

Blue Ball National Bank initially looked at Citrix Presentation Server™ as the solution to these challenges. However, the bank decided to implement the Citrix Access Suite™ to gain the additional benefits of Citrix Access Gateway™ and Citrix Password Manager™. Working with **IntelliMark**, a Silver Citrix® Solution Advisor, the bank began its implementation by rolling out Presentation Server with Microsoft® Windows Server™ 2003 on 10 HP servers centralized in the Blue Ball Operations Center.

Interestingly, when the merger got underway, the Blue Ball IT team learned that CommunityBanks is also a Citrix Presentation Server customer. The two groups are currently discussing the best way to consolidate their implementations; the domains have been combined and the next step will be creating a single farm to support the entire organization.

The Blue Ball Division, as it is now called, uses Presentation Server to access about 40 applications, including Microsoft® Office, Microsoft® Internet Explorer and banking solutions such as Harland Encore!, Silverlake, an AS400-based suite used for opening new client accounts, Laser Pro, Bondpro, Calyx, Loan Handler and others. The 300 users include loan officers, tellers, branch managers and executives, who access applications using a mix of HP thin devices and legacy PCs.

The next stage of the Access Suite implementation is deployment of Citrix Access Gateway, which will be used to provide secure, remote access to the corporate intranet for users at home or on the road. And the division is planning to roll out Password Manager to support regulatory compliance and simplify user access to applications.

IT CONSOLIDATION SIMPLIFIES SYSTEM MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

By enabling server consolidation in the data center, Citrix Presentation Server allowed the Blue Ball Division to achieve its primary goal: improving manageability of the network. “By centralizing application deployment and administration instead of running applications on 300-plus desktops, Citrix makes it much easier to support our users,” said Tim Gingrich, senior vice president and IT manager. “And now that the merger has expanded those desktops to more than a thousand, it will help even more. As CommunityBanks looks at adding more branches, a centralized architecture will streamline the process of opening new locations.”

Lyons added, “When we were running local servers, each time there was an update we had to send a technician to the branches and take the server down. Or if a server needed maintenance, someone would have to go out and fix it. This usually meant an interruption of business at the branch. Now, with Presentation Server, if there is a problem with one of the servers we can re-image it without affecting our users. In fact, I can run the system on just five of our 10 servers without any impact on availability of applications, which is something Citrix does very well. Another nice thing is that fixes can be done during the day when it’s convenient for us.”

He continued, “We’ve had a tremendous reduction in application deployment time. We test new software on two Citrix servers and then install it on our production servers. It’s quick and methodical. A few clicks, and we’ve got applications out to different people at different locations. Citrix has made life a lot simpler.”

Another benefit of centralized administration is remote support. Blue Ball has been able to streamline its help desk operation using the session shadowing capability of Presentation Server. Finally, tape backups can be done centrally.

STRENGTHENING DATA SECURITY ACROSS THE ORGANIZATION

The Citrix Access Suite is secure by design, offering CommunityBanks many ways in which to strengthen data security and regulatory compliance. The ability to lock down PCs and thin clients and centrally deploy browser software instead of installing it locally helps the organization prevent introduction of viruses and other Internet-based threats. Centralized application management simplifies and accelerates the process of updating anti-virus software and security patches.

Citrix Access Gateway provides a universal SSL VPN solution for securely connecting remote and mobile users to network resources over the Internet. Gingrich said, "Traditionally, we didn't allow network access from the outside. But now, there are increasing numbers of users asking for remote access when they are on the road or working from home, and Access Gateway gives us a secure way to provide that."

The planned implementation of Citrix Password Manager is expected to help with regulatory compliance by strengthening authentication through strong password policies and support for two-factor authentication. "We will be able to automatically set policies dictating more complex application passwords, because with enterprise single sign-on, the user never has to remember them," Gingrich commented.

REDUCING IT COSTS

Because the Citrix Access Suite enables access on virtually any type of client device, including older PCs, CommunityBanks is able to extend the useful life of its existing PCs from three years to five or more. Further, as the PCs are retired and new branches are opened, users are given thin-client devices instead.

Further, consolidation in the data center reduced the total number of servers from 18 to 10. "Eliminating the local branch servers has saved us time and money," said Gingrich. "In fact, cost savings was one of the three main justifications for the Citrix solution that we presented to executive management."

FUTURE PLANS

CommunityBanks expects to upgrade to Citrix Presentation Server 4 during 2006, anticipating such enhancements as the Universal Print Driver. In addition, the organization will leverage the two server farms for redundancy in business continuity planning.

Gingrich concluded, "The Citrix Access Suite is helping us in three major areas: network manageability, security and cost reduction. As we face new branch acquisitions, more mobile employees and requirements for business continuity, we expect it to help even more."

Networking Environment

Citrix Access Suite™ including:

- Citrix Presentation Server™ running on 10 HP DL360 servers
- Citrix Access Gateway™
- Citrix Password Manager™
- Microsoft® Windows Server™ 2003
- WAN
- HP T5700 thin clients and legacy PCs

Applications Deployed

- Microsoft® Office
- Microsoft® Internet Explorer
- Harland Encore! (bank account administration suite)
- Silverlake (core account processing)
- Laser Pro (loan documentation preparation)
- Bondpro (bond redemption)
- Calyx and Loan Handler (loan tracking)



About the Citrix Access Suite: The Citrix Access Suite™ is the most powerful enterprise solution available for providing secure, on-demand access to any enterprise resource—from anywhere, with any device, over any network. The Access Suite bundles Citrix Presentation Server™, Citrix Access Gateway™ and Citrix Password Manager™ into an always-on connection to information—whether data, voice, or people. It is secure by design, centralizes access, provides a robust and resilient foundation for business, and automatically adjusts to dynamic access scenarios.

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