

Local Agency Lessons from Cyber Attack

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MECKLENBURG COUNTY

AIR QUALITY

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Ransomware Cyber Attack on Mecklenburg County!

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Around 30 servers at Mecklenburg County, North Carolina were held hostage by hackers spreading Ransomware on Tuesday evening, forcing the authorities to go back to old school paper processes. Sources reporting to Cybersecurity Insiders say that the hackers are demanding \$23,000 worth of bitcoins to provide re-access to the files and the payment have to be made within 3 PM on Wednesday.

MECKLENBURG COUNTY

AIR QUALITY

What stopped working?

- Printing/Scanning-
 - Down for 4 business days; spotty for a few more
- Time clocks-
 - Down for 1 payroll; spotty for the next one.
 - All employees were paid on time!
- Hiring/Recruitment
 - Not fully functional until 3/15/18
- File and Record Retrieval
 - Down for 2-3 weeks

What did we do?

- Searched emails for attached permitting templates
- Verified that AirVision server was working
- Temporarily stopped transmitting data to AirNow
- Notified EPA and NCDEQ
- Posted message on website
- Issued minor source permits with placeholder language

At the time of this Permit issuance, access to Mecklenburg County's air quality database was unavailable. Therefore, at a later date, this general permit will be replaced by another version showing a specific Emission Source Table for your facility.

- Jason had some permits...and our COOP!

Lessons Learned

(from a programmatic perspective; not an IT professional's perspective)

- Know that it can happen to you without warning.
- Have a short term plan for essential services.
- Ensure that critical data is backed up and test the recovery.