Fiscal Year 2019/2020
Annual Report

Our mission is to be the most efficient and innovative data center in the state of Florida through state-of-the-art technology, leadership and partnerships. We are a dedicated service organization committed to providing a wide range of technology support for primarily public and not-for-profit entities on a cost recovery basis. We fulfill our mission by supporting our customers in accomplishing their goals and missions.
We are pleased to provide you with this extensive NWRDC annual report outlining the year’s major accomplishments. My colleagues on the Policy Board and I take strong pride in these projects, and we know they have had a positive impact on many of our customers.

We extend our appreciation for the outstanding service the dedicated staff members are continually providing to each customer. This year was unique, and the center had to adjust to a new norm of service delivery. The shift in supporting many customers remotely was a great success and our team is committed to building on their accomplishments to continue delivering quality service and a customer-centric approach as we address the impending health concerns. It is important to note that all accounting activities were aligned to best accounting practices. We also experienced a growth in the annual operating budget as well as an expansion of service offerings and the addition of a new portfolio of services. These successes are the direct result of the enthusiasm and expertise of NWRDC’s team.

In the coming year, we will begin the migration of existing mainframe services to a new platform. We are truly appreciative of all the efforts put into the negotiations of this new service. The process was competitive, with several great proposals received. NWRDC’s team did a superb job of delivering a great result with full transparency and the best interest of our customers in mind.

Our core values and mission are centered around customer satisfaction and superior service combined with cost-sensible solutions. During this reporting period, NWRDC engaged in several major agreements with outside vendors to offer volume purchases and economies of scale to our customers. We are appreciative of these relationships, and I know it is a win-win for all parties.

We also continue to engage with our customers using various means including direct e-mails, workshops, town hall events and focus engagements. These feedback opportunities have been well-received by the NWRDC team and Policy Board members alike.

Mehran Basiratmand, PhD - Policy Board Chair

Efforts to mindfully and gradually expand services based on customers’ needs are continuing to flourish. The capacity-on-demand model using both on-prem as well as cloud-based services has enabled our customers to maximize cost efficiency, generating substantial savings over traditional solutions.

I wish to express my gratitude to my colleagues on the Policy Board. Their firm commitment in moving the mission of the center forward is noteworthy. I am both honored and humbled to be re-elected as the chair again. I also wish to extend a warm welcome to our new board members. We truly look forward to working with you and seeking your expertise as we reshape the future of NWRDC.

I congratulate both the Policy Board and NWRDC's staff on the center’s excellence and look forward to continued success in the upcoming year. Thank you.

The Policy Board incorporated nine Core Values into NWRDC’s Charter in 2015. These principles have guided the center’s unprecedented growth over the last five years.

Commitment to Excellence

Superior Environment

Provide a secure, enterprise-class computing environment that meets our customers’ current and future needs, thereby allowing them to focus on their core missions.

Flexible Solutions

Work with our customers to engineer flexible approaches when their needs require unique solutions.

Quality Staff

Build and retain a diverse team of highly skilled and motivated staff.

Support

Deliver consistent, best-in-class support by managing, resolving, and preventing problems efficiently, communicating effectively and exceeding customer expectations.

Collaboration

Foster a results-oriented, collaborative atmosphere.

Communication

Establish and maintain positive, long-term relationships with our customers through open communication and continuous feedback.

Lower Costs

Reduce costs and overhead by consolidating technology solutions for all customers.

Employee Development

Create an environment that nurtures staff members’ professional and personal growth.

Customer Service

Strive to make every customer interaction a positive one.

Our Core Values

Message From The Board Chair
NWRDC’s Policy Board

Board Chair
Mehran Basiratmand, PhD
Small User Representative
Voting Member
2019-2021
Chief Technology Officer
Florida Atlantic University

Henry Martin
K-12 Representative
Voting Member
2018-2020
Chief Information Officer
Waltz County School District

Jesus Arias
Institutional Affiliate
2017-2021
Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery Manager
Florida International University

Michael Dickmann
Charter Member
2019 - 2023
Chief IT Strategist
Innovation Institute
University of West Florida

Ronald Henry
Charter Member
2017-2021
Associate Vice President and
Chief Information Officer
Florida A&M University

Gene Kovacs
Voting Member
2017-2020
Chief Information Officer
Board of Governors
State University System of Florida

NWRDC is governed by a Policy Board comprised of its major customers. Policy Board Membership is determined based on the percentage of revenue paid to the center and reviewed annually. Representatives are also appointed from three cohort groups: K-12, Small-user, and City County and Local Governments.

In October of 2019, the board began a strategic planning process to identify ways the center can better serve its customers. A strategic planning workgroup was established to gain input from technical staff across our customer base. Members of the group met in December to further expand on the board’s ideas and directives.
Welcome to Northwest Regional Data Center’s FY 2019/2020 Annual Report. This year marks NWRDC’s 48th year of service to state, local, educational and non-profit entities in Florida.

Like all of you, NWRDC has struggled with the impact of COVID-19 on our professional and personal lives. We have lost coworkers, friends, and family. We found new challenges in working remotely, missing the daily personal interaction that a close office environment brings. In watching how our NWRDC staff continues to rise to every challenge, I feel incredibly fortunate to be part of such an outstanding team.

We have maintained about 95% on-site staff coverage at NWRDC; the majority of which are our 24x7 Operations teams who never missed a step in their responsibilities. As your own travel to NWRDC was interrupted, our Smart Hands teams increased their workload, serving as your remote hands for many projects.

We continued to expand our role as Florida’s Cloud Broker, with new partnerships including AWS and Proofpoint. We also began planning for the next generation of our mainframe service. Following a competitive procurement process, we selected Ensono to partner with NWRDC to create a community-cloud mainframe service. During the planning process, Florida’s Department of Management Services and its Florida Digital Service joined in, resulting in a cloud service comprised of state and local government, universities, and K-12 school districts. Implementation is already underway, and I am sure we will have exciting updates for everyone on this project going forward.

As you read through this report, you will see several projects and additions to services designed to increase their efficiency and value to you. The strength of our Tallahassee facility was improved through new hurricane shelters, and we added antibacterial ultraviolet protection to our HVAC system. In conjunction with our Policy Board, we also began laying the groundwork for the next generation of our mainframe service. Following a competitive procurement process, we selected Ensono to partner with NWRDC to create a community-cloud mainframe service. During the planning process, Florida’s Department of Management Services and its Florida Digital Service joined in, resulting in a cloud service comprised of state and local government, universities, and K-12 school districts. Implementation is already underway, and I am sure we will have exciting updates for everyone on this project going forward.

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NWRDC would not be able to achieve these accomplishments without you! We need your input. If you have suggestions for a new service or ideas on how to improve an existing one, we want to know. Please see the QR link to our suggestion page on the back cover. As always, please let us know if we can be of service. Thank you!
Services Provided

Facilities & Infrastructure
NWRDC’s Cloud Infrastructure Services (CIS) offers a fully hosted virtual data center in a resource on-demand model. Standard physical servers are also available. We also provide environmentally controlled, CJIS Certified floor space at both our Tallahassee and Atlanta facilities.

Networking
Customers can connect to the Florida LambdaRail (FLR) as well as the NWRDC-owned Tallahassee Fiber Loop. Firewall services and commodity Internet services are also available.

Storage
Storage as a Service (STaaS) provides high performance, fiber channel connected, block level storage that can be used within a customer’s or NWRDC’s physical or virtual environments. This fully-encrypted platform is available at both Tallahassee and Atlanta sites.

Managed Services
Managed services are offered for both physical and virtual servers. We include server installation, build, configuration, patching, maintenance, troubleshooting of server hardware and OS, and a monitoring toolset.

Recovery
Our cloud-based Backup as a Service (BaaS) is available in a flexible consumption-based model. BaaS provides customers with advanced control over their backup and recovery processes.

Mainframe
NWRDC has established a community cloud for mainframe services, available through a capacity-on-demand model.

 OUR PARTNERSHIPS

We are pleased to offer a variety of additional services through our many partnerships. Customers can take advantage of competitive rates and the ability to purchase directly through NWRDC without engaging in a lengthy bid process.

Amazon Web Services
Access to over 180 cloud computing offerings, including Amazon Elastic Cloud Compute, Amazon Simple Storage Service, Cloud Endure Disaster Recovery as a Service, and VMware Cloud.

CenturyLink Global Cloud Services
Services include, but are not limited to, Cloud IaaS, DRaaS, Cloud Storage, and DDoS mitigation services.

Cyxtera Facility Services
Providing secure raised floor space, power and network services available at Cyxtera’s Atlanta Data Center.

ForeScout Discovery Tools
ForeScout’s CounterAct dynamically identifies and evaluates network endpoints the instant they connect to your network.

Microsoft Cloud Solutions Provider Program
NWRDC can support your entire Microsoft Azure lifecycle from start to finish at competitive rates.

Proofpoint Cybersecurity Solutions
Proofpoint’s security and compliance solutions include email protection, threat protection, security awareness training, digital risk protection, and archiving and compliance.

Secureworks Security Services
Secureworks’ suite of services is designed to assist customers in evaluating their networks and identifying vulnerable information assets.

Symantec Cybersecurity Solutions

TelaForce End-user Support Services
Obtain staff augmentation for special projects as well as service desk support. Calls are answered by trained staff with an emphasis on resolving all questions on first contact.
Strategic Partnerships

NWRDC is proud to offer a variety of services through our many partnerships. We were pleased to add both Amazon Web Services and Proofpoint to our catalog of offerings this year.

Throughout the year, NWRDC engaged its Policy Board and customers in strategic planning workgroups to determine which new offerings were most in-demand, and how the center could best fill those needs. With cybersecurity and meeting the requirements of the State of Florida’s Cloud First initiative both major areas of interest among our customers, NWRDC sought out new partnerships to bring those solutions to our catalog of services.

In joining with leading cloud computing service provider Amazon Web Services (AWS), NWRDC can provide a cost-saving opportunity for its customers to continue to move into the cloud. The AWS partnership brings services such as Amazon Elastic Cloud Compute (Amazon EC2), Amazon Simple Storage Service (Amazon S3), Cloud Endure disaster recovery as a service (CE DRaaS), VMware Cloud on AWS (VMC), and over 180 other state-of-the-art cloud computing offerings to our public sector customers.

Understanding that data security is an ever-growing concern for its customers, NWRDC approached leading cybersecurity company Proofpoint to become a State, Local and Educational Channel Partner. The agreement brings Proofpoint’s security and compliance tools, which span email, social media, the web, networks, and cloud platforms, including Microsoft Office 365, to our service catalog. Solutions including advanced email protection, advanced threat protection, security awareness training, information protection, cloud app security, digital risk protection, and archiving and compliance are now all available to NWRDC’s customers.

Through the economy of scale provided by NWRDC’s business model, AWS and Proofpoint’s solutions can now be affordable additions to our customers’ organizations as they plan to meet the challenges of today’s IT world. NWRDC will continue to work for its customers to offer new solutions that can further their successful operations.
Pandemic Response

The spread of COVID-19 during the Spring of 2020 presented unique challenges for businesses throughout the country. NWRDC was prepared to meet them.

On March 16, 2020, NWRDC’s host institution, Florida State University, moved to remote-work operations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. With its primary concern the health of its staff and customers, the center responded with a highly successful plan for seamless continuation of services during the stay-at-home order.

Operations remained fully staffed on-site 24x7, with customers encouraged to utilize NWRDC’s Smart Hands offering. This service provides remote hands for rebooting systems, racking new equipment, and most other data center floor tasks. Technical and administrative staff worked remotely. An on-site rotation schedule of three technical staff was implemented to ensure adequate daily coverage for all customer requests. Only essential vendor and customer personnel were allowed on site, with visits scheduled through Operations in advance of arrival to ensure proper social distancing measures were followed. Visitors were verbally screened prior to entry for flu-like symptoms, contact with individuals testing positive, or travel to areas subject to a US CDC Level 3 Travel Health Notice. Face coverings were required for all individuals while inside the building.

Building cleaning rotations were increased, with special attention paid to high-contact areas such as doors, light switches and other common surfaces. Ultraviolet germicidal irradiation (UVGI) was installed in the center’s HVAC system to further reduce the spread of contagions. UVGI is a method of disinfection utilizing short wavelength ultraviolet light to inactivate or kill microorganisms and pathogens as a means of disinfecting surfaces, air and water. It has been recommended or used for the isolation of disease and bio-defense systems by the US Army, CDC and FEMA.

Communications within NWRDC, and with its customers, vendors and board, remained strong throughout the pandemic. New projects, partnerships and services were launched successfully, with kickoff and planning meetings held via Zoom. Most importantly, center staff remained healthy and safe while continuing to provide the high quality service NWRDC’s customers have come to expect.

Key Figures

$24,051,576 Budget
NWRDC’s FY 2019/2020 budget reflected an 11% increase over the previous year.

6 New Customers
Alachua County Board of County Commissioners, Big Bend Hospice, Broward College, City of Boynton Beach, Florida Commission on Human Relations, and Florida Department of Lottery

2,100 Hours Professional Development
NWRDC’s employees exceeded their yearly professional development requirements by 25%. A minimum of 30 hours are required for A&P staff. USPS must complete 20.

89% Technical Staff ITIL Certified
NWRDC made significant strides in its goal for all technical staff to achieve ITIL Foundations certification.

2,883 Restores
NWRDC performed 2883 restores across 989 servers for 10 separate Backup as a Service customers.

28,947 Patches
28,947 patches were applied across 9,819 servers. Patch management is the foundation for mitigating risk around data confidentiality and system integrity.
NWRDC ended its fiscal year with a positive balance. As a cost-recovery organization, our budgetary savings of $589,952 was returned to our customers in the form of credits or rate reductions for FY 2020/2021.

**REVENUE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Budgeted</th>
<th>Actual</th>
<th>Over/Under</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operating Revenue</td>
<td>14,002,707</td>
<td>14,178,818</td>
<td>(176,111)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract Management Revenue</td>
<td>6,872,107</td>
<td>8,390,787</td>
<td>(1,518,680)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrafund Transfers In</td>
<td>3,118,246</td>
<td>3,466,151</td>
<td>(347,905)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer Surplus from Previous FY</td>
<td>58,516</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>58,516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL NET REVENUE</strong></td>
<td>24,051,576</td>
<td>26,035,756</td>
<td>(2,042,186)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**EXPENSES - INCLUDING INDIRECT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Budgeted</th>
<th>Actual</th>
<th>Over/Under</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salaries and Benefits</td>
<td>6,022,125</td>
<td>5,276,642</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reseller Expenses</td>
<td>6,639,717</td>
<td>8,034,569</td>
<td>121%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Expenses</td>
<td>7,753,402</td>
<td>8,053,284</td>
<td>126%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consulting Services</td>
<td>43,407</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contractual Services</td>
<td>3,291,363</td>
<td>3,820,194</td>
<td>128%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depreciation</td>
<td>532,680</td>
<td>483,435</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freight and Postage</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hardware Maintenance</td>
<td>455,534</td>
<td>572,420</td>
<td>126%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance</td>
<td>39,361</td>
<td>20,858</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memberships and Subscriptions</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printing and Duplicating</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>4,209</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rentals</td>
<td>62,679</td>
<td>58,334</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repairs and Maintenance</td>
<td>253,019</td>
<td>255,301</td>
<td>105%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Software Maintenance</td>
<td>2,215,290</td>
<td>2,153,087</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplies</td>
<td>4,179</td>
<td>12,375</td>
<td>296%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplies - IT</td>
<td>94,651</td>
<td>118,376</td>
<td>125%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telecommunications</td>
<td>143,717</td>
<td>104,494</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel and Training</td>
<td>107,035</td>
<td>70,733</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>395,597</td>
<td>335,034</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL GENERAL EXPENSES</strong></td>
<td>7,753,402</td>
<td>8,053,284</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrafund Transfers Out</td>
<td>3,079,839</td>
<td>3,320,192</td>
<td>105%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AUXILIARY FEES</strong></td>
<td>3,079,839</td>
<td>3,320,192</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OTHER CAPITAL OUTLAY</strong></td>
<td>750,000</td>
<td>751,072</td>
<td>101%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DEFICITS FROM PREVIOUS FY</strong></td>
<td>38,881</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The center has been successful in keeping indirect costs under 14% for over five years, despite steady budgetary growth.

As NWRDC operates on a cost-recovery basis, neither our Charter nor Florida Statutes permit retention of financial surpluses. Our customers have benefited from account credits and service rate reductions whenever possible for over ten years in a row.

The Contract Management cost center includes all partner services. NWRDC has worked to expand its partnerships over the last five years, creating a wide variety of service offerings available to customers.
The Year’s Accomplishments

BACKUP AS A SERVICE (BaaS)

Restore Testing

The NWRDC Backup and Recovery Services team has placed a strong emphasis on the word “recovery” during the last fiscal year. In the first quarter of FY 2019/2020, NWRDC implemented a “Restore Testing” policy and procedure, with the goal of completing restores that equaled a minimum of 16% of each customer’s total server count on the BaaS platform. The restores covered a multitude of types, including file level restores, application specific restores (e.g., SQL DB, Oracle DB, Exchange, etc.), granular level virtual server restores, and even whole virtual server restores. To date we have successfully tested 2,883 individual restores for our customers over an average of 28.61% of each customer’s total server count. We will continue to provide restore testing for each of our managed backup customers as we enter FY 2020/2021, and look forward to serving each of them in the future.

FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS

Hurricane Shutters

In preparation for the upcoming storm season, NWRDC installed protective hurricane shutters on the building’s exterior windows in January, 2020.

DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE RACK CONSOLIDATION

Redesigned for Efficiency

As the Department of Revenue (DOR) shifted from DOR-owned hardware to NWRDC’s Enterprise Services, NWRDC used the opportunity to reduce the rack footprint in the data center.

In June of 2019, DOR subscribed to 13 rack tiles occupying 208 square feet of data center floor space with 1370kw of power provisioned to their racks. Identifying potential savings, NWRDC worked with numerous teams from DOR to plan and execute a major rack consolidation project. Work began by consolidating multiple physical servers into five server chassis. New overhead ladder rack and cabling were added. In addition, new network and server racks, allowing for cable management to improve airflow and rack workspace were installed. Over one weekend, the teams from DOR and NWRDC migrated all core network gear, load balancers, security equipment, and five server chassis.

With careful design, NWRDC was able to reduce DOR’s floor space to 144 square feet and 720kw of allocated power. The project resulted in approximately $45,000 in recurring savings to the customer. “For the past ten years our infrastructure has grown significantly within the NWRDC environment,” said DOR project manager Sarah Fixel. “NWRDC proactively developed a project with us to reorganize and reduce our rack space, which ultimately reduced our racks from thirteen to nine. This freed up floor space and saved us money that we can allocate to more strategic projects in the future.”

Additional benefits resulting from the project included bringing the Menard Suite’s racks into a standard alignment, removing an abundance of under-floor cabling, and moving all required cabling into overhead ladder rack, which has greatly improved airflow and cooling in the data center.
CONFERENCES AND PRESENTATIONS

The center’s staff participated in numerous conferences throughout the year, offering presentations on a variety of topics impacting the IT community. At the 2019 Florida Association of Educational Data Centers (FAEDS) conference, Executive Director Tim Brown and Policy Board Vice Chair Henry Martin presented on ransomware prevention, while CTO Matt Stolk led a discussion on defining cloud strategies. Staff also attended the annual Florida Local Government Information Systems Association (FLGISA) convention to promote the center’s new cloud offerings.

UPCOMING: MAINFRAME AS A SERVICE

NWRDC spent considerable time throughout the year planning its upcoming Mainframe as a Service (MFaaS) offering. This competitively sourced community cloud solution will replace the center’s current z/10 platform with a z/15 environment maintained by business partner Ensono. The service will deliver a capacity-on-demand model, providing customers with access to increased capacity when business needs demand it, without locking in higher costs once those needs have been met.

Ensono will install and maintain the new z/15 environment in both the center’s Steve Menard Computing Suite in Tallahassee and in NWRDC’s disaster recovery site in Atlanta. The new z/15 engines will bring customers improved performance while reducing overall software costs. Florida Digital Service, formerly the State Division of Technology, has joined with the center to utilize MFaaS for its state customers’ mainframe needs.

The transition to MFaaS is planned for four phases and expected to be complete by January 2021. Staff will work closely with customers in scheduling migrations of their existing LPARs to the new z/15. We look forward to launching this new initiative.

ACCOLADES

“Working with NWRDC has been one of the most gratifying experiences we have ever had. Since our very first visit, we were very impressed not only with their facilities, but also with the professionalism of the staff, and the variety of levels of services provided. NWRDC’s staff has always been helpful and professional, and provided solid solutions that fit our budget. They assisted us in every step of our project, from planning, deployment and to the daily operations. Today, the center is a key component of our Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) and disaster recovery operations. I can guarantee you that NWRDC will be a solid investment for your organization’s DR plans, knowing you have a reliable, professional, and always available agency ready to help you when you may need it the most.”

Virgilio Vensamoye, CGCIO, CPM, Network Manager
Alachua County Information and Telecommunications Department

“I just want to thank you and your staff for completing our project by date promised, amid of all that is going on, and with a few uncertainties in between! Thank you for providing us with great service. It is very much appreciated.”

Pura Ahler, Service Development Process Manager
Florida Department of Revenue

SERVICE AWARDS

NWRDC had six employees recognized by Florida State University in 2019 for their sustained years of service to the organization.

- Danny Burnett: 35 years
- Donna Cotton: 10 years
- Anthony Crago: 20 years
- Dianna Norwood: 35 years
- Brett Simpson: 10 years
- Ruby Zindler: 10 years
Northwest Regional Data Center

*Florida’s Cloud Broker*

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Tallahassee, FL 32310

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info@nwrdc.fsu.edu
www.nwrdc.fsu.edu

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https://tinyurl.com/y2l3zmlh

Suggestions?
Link to our survey below: