



## CASE STUDY

# Madera County Partners with C1 to Strengthen Cyber Defense Strategies



Madera County, officially the County of Madera, is located at the geographic center of California. It features a varied landscape, encompassing the eastern San Joaquin Valley and the central Sierra Nevada, with Madera as the county seat. Established in 1893 from part of Fresno County, Madera County reported a population of 156,255 in the 2020 census. With a section of Yosemite National Park within its borders, Madera County has leveraged tourism as a key economic driver. Additionally, it has established itself as a leading agricultural center.



**"C1 took the time to really understand who we are."**

Brian Rhode | *Deputy Chief Information Officer, Madera County*

## The challenge: Addressing Rising Cybersecurity Threats with a Proactive Strategy

With cybersecurity threats on the rise, Madera County recognized the need for a more proactive approach and a robust security program. Lacking a formal security framework, the county had been addressing issues on an ad hoc basis. Previous technology partners failed to deliver a cohesive security strategy.

"I saw the cyber-crime landscape change and how these attackers were beginning to do real damage," recalled Brian Rohde, Deputy Chief Information Officer for Madera County. "With the emergence of ransomware targeting government agencies, we needed a technology partner who shared our vision of how to protect our county."

The county's previous technology partners did not cultivate the essential trusted partner relationship, so Madera County drew up plans for a security overhaul of "everything from the top of the stack to the bottom of the stack," said Rohde.

To achieve this goal, the county embarked on a comprehensive evaluation process to find a partner that could help them in bringing their vision to life.

The county needed a partner with a deep understanding of its IT goals and a shared strategic approach to developing a robust security framework. Cisco recommended that Madera County talk to C1.

## The solution: A Strategic Partnership between Madera County and C1

After careful consideration, Madera County selected C1 as their trusted partner. As Rohde explained, "C1 stood out to us because of their commitment to excellence in cybersecurity and their technical expertise that aligned with our goals."



Initially, Madera County engaged C1 in small projects to test the partnership. After these projects proved successful, the county approved a significant investment with C1 and a suite of Cisco security tools. Together, C1 and Madera County identified hardware and software security gaps.

“Adam Eisenberg, C1 client executive, and Abdul Sultani, C1 sales engineer, went above and beyond the scoping and took the time to really understand who we are,” said Rohde. “It was very clear that C1 was highly skilled in this field, which was very beneficial.”

In addition to the Cisco solutions, C1 recommended that the county consider Arctic Wolf Managed Detection and Response (MDR) and Extended Detection and Response (XDR) for additional network security. Ultimately, the county found the Arctic Wolf solution a fit for their environment. Rohde recalled, “C1 was instrumental in executing our well-crafted plans and elevating our cybersecurity standards.”

## **The result: Setting a New Benchmark for Public Sector Cybersecurity**

Thanks to the strategic partnership between Madera County and C1, the county achieved impressive results in its cybersecurity journey. With a strong commitment to continuously evolve and adapt to new challenges, they ensured that their IT infrastructure remained secure while advancing technological initiatives across departments. This was made possible by the county's decisive leadership, C1's support and setting a new benchmark for public sector cybersecurity.

With ongoing evaluations alongside the advanced monitoring capabilities, the county can ensure that they remain resilient against emerging threats, reinforcing their commitment to safeguarding public services and citizen data.

Following the successful integration of Arctic Wolf's services, the county's cyber resilience has notably transformed, providing enhanced security management that is both efficient and responsive. With layered monitoring in place, Rohde emphasizes the effectiveness of their approach, stating, “Cisco's looking at Arctic Wolf and ingesting that telemetry, but Arctic Wolf also has their own monitoring mechanism. For me, that overlapping protection is peace of mind.” This multi-faceted strategy not only strengthens their security posture but also reduces the frequency of false positives, enabling the county's IT team to focus on legitimate threats and operational needs.

The visibility gained from Arctic Wolf's analytics empowers county officials to investigate potential security events thoroughly. “There are a lot of times when someone's doing something in our environment, and we get alerted to it so we can investigate,” Rohde explains. This capability enhances the county's readiness to address real threats while fostering a secure environment for everyday operations. As they shift to proactive threat management, resources are better allocated, allowing for more strategic initiatives across various departments.

Furthermore, this advancement in monitoring has encouraged a culture of security awareness among employees. By hosting regular training sessions and workshops, the county ensures its staff is well-equipped to identify and report anomalies. In a landscape where cyber threats continue to evolve, such proactive engagement is essential in maintaining the integrity of public services and safeguarding sensitive data. The combination of advanced technology and human vigilance is setting a new standard for the county's cybersecurity efforts. As Rohde concludes, “We are confident that our strengthened defenses will protect our critical assets and sensitive data from ever-evolving cyber threats.”

The collaboration between Madera County and C1 serves as a testament to the power of strategic partnerships in tackling complex challenges like cybersecurity. Together, they have paved the way for other organizations to follow suit and take charge of their own cybersecurity advancement.



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