TOWN OF HALIFAX

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Town of Halifax, Massachusetts has adopted the Cyber Security best practice as part of a Community Compact agreement signed with the Baker-Polito Administration in September of 2015. The Town retained the services of Unified Networking Systems of Raynham, Massachusetts to assess the Town's cyber security via a comprehensive network security assessment. In the fall of 2016, Unified Networking Systems completed their assessment and delivered a report to Town leadership detailing their findings and recommendations.

In partnership with:

Office of Municipal and School Technology MassIT
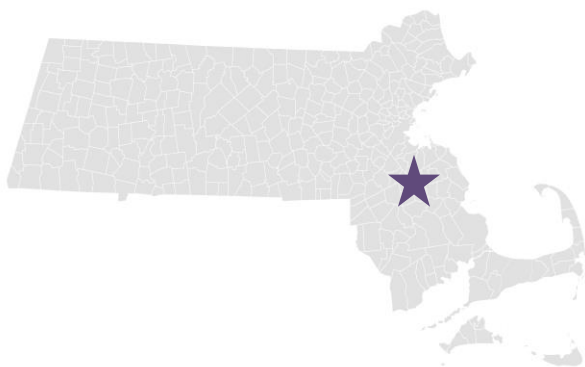
COMMUNITY PROFILE

The Town of Halifax is located in the eastern part of Massachusetts in Plymouth County. The Town is partially home to the Burrage Pond Wildlife Management Area, which holds the biggest cranberry bog in the world. Quincy Market, a National Historic Landmark, was designed by architect Alexander Parris, originally from Halifax.

Population is 7,518 residents*
Annual Budget is $21M (FY 2017)
Median Household Income is $57,015*

*As of 2010 census

Photo Credit: Flickr – Ornoth at West Lake in Halifax, Massachusetts

THE CHALLENGE

Halifax is a smaller community, with a mix of residential, agricultural, and rural development. Technology investments need to be appropriate for a community of its size and resources. These investments are important because smaller communities like Halifax are increasingly being targeted by cyber criminals. Residents, visitors, and Town employees expect quality services delivered over a secure network.

THE SOLUTION

The Community Compact Cabinet provided a grant to Halifax to support their adoption of the Cyber Security best practice area. Halifax used this resource to retain the services of Unified Networking Systems to assess the security of their network and make recommendations for areas of improvement or best practices the Town may want to consider adopting.

THE RESULTS

The confidential audit report from Unified Networking Systems is comprehensive and classifies findings in several categories: **high risk**, which indicates an immediate threat and requires immediate attention; **medium risk**, which indicates a minimal threat but is an area that should be addressed soon; **low risk**, which indicates a potential threat; and **information/best practice**, which indicates an industry best practice which the Town may want to consider adopting. The town of Halifax is actively working with the vendor to address the needs outlined in the report.

MUNICIPAL AND SCHOOL CYBER SECURITY FACTS

3 times
distributed denial of service (DDOS) attacks disabled Maine.gov in March of 2015

Christmas Eve, 2015
the sixth time that Rutgers University's computer network was attacked over the past three semesters

204 million
emails were sent every minute in 2014 (approximately)

$10
price of a personnel record on the black market, which can contain a social security number

Sources: The Changing Face of Cybersecurity & What it Means for Municipalities - http://www.njlmef.org/policy-papers/FoLG_V7_3.pdf
Managing Technology Risks Through Technological Proficiency - http://blousteinlocal.rutgers.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/BLGRC-managing-technology-risk.pdf

"The network security assessment provided much insight on what Halifax must accomplish to move forward with modern technology infrastructures and best practices. I am confident that the results of this assessment shed light on the critical updates and upgrades needed for the Town's current IT systems and policies. We are presently utilizing the results of the network assessment to compile a Three-Year Technology Plan which, in return, will improve our current IT infrastructure and policies."

- Cesar P. Calouro Jr., Director of Information Technology

Photo Credit: Wikimedia Commons – John Phelan on Route 36 in Halifax, Massachusetts