

## Case Study

# Cybersecurity and Compliance for South River Electric Membership Corporation



South River Electric Membership Corporation, (South River EMC) is a member-owned electric distribution cooperative that delivers electricity to 43,000 members in five North Carolina counties. The cooperative was founded in 1940 and is based in Dunn, NC. South River EMC has 107 employees and is owned and controlled by the members who utilize its services. The cooperative is managed by CEO and Executive Vice President Chris Spears and has nine member-elected directors.



**Industry**  
Energy



**Size**  
125 employees

As a cooperative, South River EMC has close relationships with its stakeholders according to Tim Peede, vice president of IT and CIO of South River EMC.



We've been thrilled with what we get from Netsurion and we were thrilled enough to share the great results.

Tim Peede, Vice President of IT and CIO  
South River EMC

## Challenge



As a Critical Infrastructure (CI) electricity provider as well as a financial entity that bills its members, South River EMC's need for security and monitoring solutions is at the highest level. Like any entity that accepts credit cards, South River EMC must comply with the Payment Card Industry – Data Security Standard (PCI DSS). The Payment Card Industry is a private group set up by the major credit card companies to define standards for companies that process credit card transactions. PCI DSS is designed to prevent credit card fraud, hacking and other security issues. Any company that processes, stores, or transmits credit card numbers must be PCI DSS compliant or risk losing the ability to process credit card payments. Secure access to the electric grid as well as members' financial information is an imperative.

## Solution



Tim was looking for a way to strengthen the Cooperative's security capabilities to meet emerging threats. "Our previous solution was cumbersome when it came to digging through the large volume of data that was generated every day," said Tim. "When I look at the daily report, I need to know what's "noise" and what is a cybersecurity issue that I need to address. PCI DSS compliance reporting was of the utmost importance to us as well. So, we began looking for another solution."

In Netsurion's SIEM, South River EMC found a cost-effective security reporting and monitoring platform. "We needed a solution with the right product mix. We wanted the ability to identify and report anomalies in the network, combined with the freedom to have the reporting display and function in an actionable format," said Tim.

South River EMC brought in Netsurion and as the initial deployment was completed, it began monitoring hundreds of devices in the co-op's network. Netsurion provides a complete view of the IT infrastructure and helped to identify potential threats. Because Netsurion could classify according to user priorities, it allows the co-op's IT security staff to address the most critical incidents first while reducing the time needed to isolate and correct issues. Netsurion correlates with South River EMC's network on a more granular level than the utility had previously experienced.

"It could tie a log event to a time of day, and the person who created the event," said Tim. "The hyperlinks it provides in the reporting made it very easy to use and point right to the event in question. It took two minutes to log in and receive a detailed record of what happened today and what connected to the server. Its search capability is tremendous."

## Results



This helped South River EMC to realize significant benefits in work hours, and having access to expert security staff. "Netsurion Enterprise is one of the few services that I have dealt with that exceeded my expectations," said Tim. "I knew the Managed Open XDR platform, Netsurion, would provide the alerting and reporting we needed, but I was surprised at the rapid speed it allowed through intuitive presentation of information. What I am usually looking for is the 'needle in the haystack' – the one problem that needs my attention is often difficult to locate. Netsurion Enterprise finds those 'needles' and then shows me just where they are. It's saved me and my staff lots of time and helps keep the network secure."

Tim considers the collaborative nature of cooperatives across the county. "The co-op community is different than the rest of the business world. When we find a solution that works, we let other co-ops know. We've been thrilled with the results from Netsurion, and we are thrilled enough to share the great results."

Netsurion® delivers an adaptive managed security solution that integrates our [XDR platform](#) with your existing security investments and technology stack, easily scaling to fit your business needs. Netsurion's managed offering includes our 24x7 SOC that operates as your trusted cybersecurity partner, working closely with your IT team to strengthen your cybersecurity posture. Our solution delivers Managed Threat Protection so you can confidently focus on your core business.

Headquartered in Ft. Lauderdale, FL with a global team of security analysts and engineers, Netsurion is a leader in Managed Extended Detection and Response (MXDR). Learn more at [www.netsurion.com](http://www.netsurion.com).