

# American Fire Systems Elevates IT Infrastructure with iland, now 11:11 Systems, Cloud and Backup for Microsoft 365.

SOLUTIONS: IaaS, 365 Backup

## Client Profile

American Fire Systems, Inc. is one of the premier fire protection company contractors in Texas. Founded in 2002, AFS has since cultivated a strong legacy of selling, designing, and installing best-in-class fire protection systems, including sprinklers, alarms, pumps, and extinguishers, for residential, commercial, and industrial facilities. Headquartered in Houston, Texas and licensed in Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, and Colorado, the company is bolstered by proficient and experienced field workers and administrative staff that are well-versed in safety and quality as well as national and local fire codes.

## Taking Infrastructure to the Next Level

Steve Broeder joined American Fire Systems (AFS) with a single directive: Modernize the company's IT capabilities and infrastructure. AFS had been hosting its data on premises, but as the company grew, expanding into markets across Texas, the amount of data being funneled through its Houston headquarters began to bottleneck. This impacted the user experience across the company and left it vulnerable to downtime if a disaster were to occur at its lone data center.

For Broeder, an early adopter of cloud technology, the solution was clear. With a small server footprint and lacking advantages from economies of scale, elevating the company's infrastructure meant taking it to the cloud. "I've had a lot of experience in the cloud," said Broeder, who began working with the technology while at a cloud-first startup in 2017. "I just knew AFS was a really prime candidate for the redundancy, security, and cost savings the cloud could offer. That's when our journey began."



## CHALLENGES

- Aging equipment needing performance improvements and replacement
- Enable secure and reliable access to data
- Increasing cybersecurity threats
- Department of Financial Services Regulations

## SOLUTIONS

- [11:11] Cloud (IaaS)
- [11:11] Cloud Backup for Microsoft 365

## BENEFITS

- Scalable cloud for business expansion
- Continuous data availability and business uptime
- Platform control and flexibility
- Predictable pricing with no hidden fees

## PROFILE

- Size: SMB
- Industry: Construction

## AMERICAN FIRE SYSTEMS CASE STUDY

While AFS had previously been hesitant to commit to cloud, Broeder's expertise, and the benefits he laid out, assuaged those concerns. At his previous job, Broeder successfully deployed [11:11]'s Secure Cloud Disaster Recovery as a Service (DRaaS) while decommissioning a redundant data center. So when it came time to find an Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) solution that AFS could trust to host and run its mission-critical applications, he knew exactly where to look.

Built around a specific strategy to plan, predict, migrate, optimize, and protect, [11:11] Secure Cloud provides the best of cloud by including everything an organization needs to satisfy even the most complex application requirements. As a result, Broeder was able to obtain the redundancy and flexibility he needed to ensure that AFS had a secure path for growth now and in the future. He also gained the benefit of increased visibility via the award-winning [11:11] Secure Cloud Console, which gives him the ability to monitor and manage a variety of workloads over a single pane of glass.

"I had such a positive past experience with [11:11] — from the cloud console's intuitive interface to the quality of support to the competitiveness of its pricing. It gave me a ton of confidence when trusting them to handle our cloud transformation," said Broeder. "I also have experience working with the large hyperscale clouds and some of the weird ways they do things, especially on the networking side. It can just become a nightmare. [11:11] offers a simple environment that will allow me, and those after me, to easily maintain and grow the company well into the future."



### Weather Proof and Ransomware Ready

According to Broeder, the ability to ensure business continuity, no matter the circumstance, was the primary driver for taking AFS to the cloud — and for good reason. Those who pay attention to national news will know that mother nature makes life particularly difficult for businesses in Houston. Recently, both intense heat and uncharacteristic cold have caused grid failures, leaving many, including AFS, without power or access to their network. Then, of course, there was Hurricane Harvey, which devastated the region in 2017.

"Redundancy for our power and systems was our No. 1 priority when exploring a move to the cloud," said Broeder. "When an ice storm caused rolling blackouts across the state back in February 2021, our Houston office went down, which meant our whole system went down. Luckily, it was an event that impacted the whole state, so our other offices were shut down as well. But thinking about the future, we couldn't risk breaking our business continuity across all our locations in the event of a hurricane or some other disaster in Houston."

Unplanned downtime can often result in irrecoverable, long-term damage to the company. Whether from cybercrime, hardware failure, or natural disasters, the impact of a disaster event can often be felt for years in terms of revenue loss, customer churn, or the inability to continue business operations. Broeder addressed these concerns by transitioning AFS away from its single location data center and into [11:11] Cloud, which also came with the benefit of built-in Secure Cloud Backup for additional security. To complete AFS' cloud transformation, Broeder opted to append [11:11] Cloud Backup for Microsoft 365, solidifying a well-rounded business continuity strategy that accounted for potentially-devastating downtime and filled the gaps in Microsoft's limited retention policy.

AFS is now in a much better position to defend against the threat of ransomware, currently the fastest growing type of cybercrime, impacting a new organization once every 11 seconds, according to research by Cybersecurity Ventures. At his former company, Broeder saw the benefits of a well architected plan firsthand when — at 2:00 a.m. — he learned that his company's production file server had been infected by ransomware. With frequent, clean backups to restore from, Broeder was, thankfully, able to recover full functionality within a matter of hours without any data loss or having to pay a ransom.

## AMERICAN FIRE SYSTEMS CASE STUDY

“[11:11 Systems] checked all my boxes and provided everything that I needed, especially when it came to pricing. They really won me over with the quote they brought to the table. It was a real stable cost model that allows me to scale up or down and still have a very accurate picture of what our expenses will be now and moving forward. [11:11] solves for those classic cloud gotchas with simple pricing for predictability.”

**Steve Broeder, IT Manager at American Fire Systems**

“Data protection services are kind of like insurance for your car. You buy it hoping you never get into a wreck. But, at some point, it’s probably going to happen, so you need to be prepared,” said Broeder. “In the event of a ransomware attack, my goal is to have backups of everything. This is where 11:11 Cloud Backup for Microsoft 365 is especially important. Even if we were attacked and something came in and scrambled everything in our OneDrive environment, we have those backups. We can just restore and move on.”

### Gotchas Be Gone: Pricing Made Simple

It has become a common assumption that adopting cloud computing will automatically translate to reduced costs. But the reality can be a much different story. In fact, without the right cloud provider, the true costs of cloud can add up fast. Having already dealt with other cloud providers, Broeder knew this well. However, with [11:11] he was able to shed common cloud billing gotchas in favor of clarity and predictability.

“Having worked with large hyperscale cloud providers in the past, I know how big those cost gotchas can be — with ingress and egress fees you have to pay coming and going. And those hidden costs can really sneak up on you,” said Broeder.

With [11:11], AFS got a complete cloud at a fair price. [11:11] believes that cloud providers should actually deliver on the promise of paying only for what customers use, and thinks cloud services should include everything you need to successfully operate your

infrastructure. That includes network connectivity, backup and disaster recovery, monitoring, the [11:11] security suite, and industry-leading, 24x7x365 support. And just because services are included at no additional cost does not mean compromising on performance. These services are top-tier infrastructure, not commoditized afterthoughts.

“[11:11] checked all my boxes and provided everything that I needed, especially when it came to pricing,” said Broeder. “They really won me over with the quote they brought to the table. It was a real stable cost model that allows me to scale up or down and still have a very accurate picture of what our expenses will be now and moving forward. [11:11] solves for those classic cloud gotchas with simple pricing for predictability.”

**RETHINK** CONNECTED

