11:11 DRaaS for Zerto, Managed Recovery, Connectivity for AWS

11:11 SYSTEMS

Oklahoma Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance (OKFB) Strengthens Disaster Recovery Readiness and Cloud Connectivity with 11:11 Systems

OKLAHOMA FARM BUREAU INSURANCE

Challenges:

- Mitigating disaster risk in a state where tornadoes can affect both OKFB and its policyholders.
- Maintaining critical claims, policy, and check-processing capabilities during a disruption.
- Replacing remote backup options that were either too slow or too close to the home office.
- Moving beyond basic replication toward a functional hot site where systems could run.
- Testing recovery plans often enough to support business continuity planning.
- Meeting a vendor-driven AWS connectivity requirement under a tight deadline.

Solution:

- 11:11 Disaster Recovery as a Service (DRaaS) for Zerto
- 11:11 Managed Recovery
- 11:11 Managed Connectivity for AWS Direct Connect

Benefits:

- Achieved tested recovery of critical systems in just under an hour
- Validated a recovery process that exceeded the company's original eight-hour goal
- Strengthened business continuity planning with regular testing and clearer recovery expectations
- Gained confidence that recovery could begin even if local connectivity or infrastructure were disrupted
- Reduced the burden on internal IT teams through managed recovery and connectivity support
- Extended an existing 11:11 relationship into AWS connectivity when internal resources and timelines were constrained

Profile:

- Industry: Insurance
- Size: SMB

Client Profile

Oklahoma Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance (OKFB) is a local, Oklahoma-based insurance company providing auto, home, farm and ranch, commercial, life and other insurance offerings to policyholders across the state. Founded in 1946, the company now operates offices in all 77 Oklahoma counties, with a statewide network of local agents serving more than 140,000 member families. OKFB is headquartered in Oklahoma City. For more information, please visit: okfbinsurance.com.

In Need of Disaster Recovery Built for Tornado Alley

For Oklahoma Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance (OKFB), disaster recovery planning begins with the realities of the state it serves.

Located in the heart of Tornado Alley, Oklahoma averages more than 50 tornadoes each year, according to the Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management. Since 1980, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has recorded 115 billion-dollar weather and climate disasters, including 76 severe storm events.

As an insurance company serving policyholders across the state, Oklahoma's history of severe weather disruption carries direct business consequences. The tornadoes and severe storms that damage homes, farms, businesses, and communities can also threaten the availability of OKFB's employees, offices, systems, agents, and adjusters.

It's in those moments, most of all, that claims need to move, systems need to be accessible, and the company's teams need to assist OKFB families, farms, and businesses trying to recover.

"We're an insurance company," said Philip Miller, Senior Automation Engineer at OKFB. "We need our customers to feel safe. We need them to believe in our ability to function when disaster strikes. Because if we cannot function, then we cannot write the checks that keep our policyholders functioning."

In other words, OKFB cannot afford to leave disaster recovery up to chance. It has to be tested, documented, and ready long before the next storm arrives. Because in Oklahoma, it will.

From DR Planning to a Working Recovery Environment

As the Director of Information Systems at OKFB, it is Lydia Kulman's responsibility to ensure the company's DR strategy is more than just a plan on paper—but something that's tested and ready for execution.

When the OKFB team thinks about disaster recovery, internal infrastructure isn't their only consideration. They are also thinking about whether critical systems can be recovered quickly enough to support agents, adjusters, employees, and policyholders during a major disruption.

OKFB had already spent years working through the limits of its disaster recovery strategy. At first, the company tried to use one of its own offices as a remote backup and recovery site. The concept worked, but the connection was too slow to keep systems replicated properly so teams could get work done in a timely manner.

A secondary location partially solved the speed problem, but it introduced a different concern. Even with strong building protections, the site was too close to the home office for the kind of regional disaster planning Oklahoma demands.

Storage-based replication created another partial answer. Data could be copied elsewhere, but OKFB needed more than a place to store replicated systems. The team needed a hot site—a fully equipped, redundant disaster recovery solution that would run in parallel to the company's primary data center—where critical infrastructure could be powered on, accessed, tested, and used during a real disaster event.

"We needed a hot site that could really function if we needed it to," said Miller, who has been with OKFB for more than 40 years, playing an active role in the evolution of its infrastructure. "11:11 Systems really fit that bill."

While OKFB already used Zerto technology, the organization needed more than a backup solution and plan. They needed holistic, cloud-based disaster recovery and networking solutions tailored to their exact business goals. To overcome these IT challenges, they chose 11:11 Systems.

Over time, this partnership matured, and together OKFB and 11:11 created a robust managed recovery and connectivity strategy. Today, OKFB relies on 11:11's resilient cloud platform to secure its data and streamline operations. This customized infrastructure features 11:11 Disaster Recovery as a Service (DRaaS) for Zerto, 11:11 Managed Recovery, and 11:11 Managed Connectivity for AWS Direct Connect.

Turning Recovery Goals Into Tested Results

11:11 DRaaS for Zerto aligned with what OKFB needed most: recovery built around critical workloads, not static backup copies.

With 11:11's solution, the OKFB team could not only achieve direct, seamless integration with Zerto replication software, but they could also support customized runbooks, optimized recovery time objectives (RTOs) and near-zero recovery point objectives (RPOs), all with the benefit of end-to-end management via the 11:11 Managed Recovery Program.

Even more importantly, 11:11 DRaaS afforded OKFB the ability to test failover without service disruption, verify runbooks before a disaster, and, ultimately, be sure its recovery plans could and would live up to the business' expectations for availability in the midst of a regional disaster.

Originally, the company set a recovery goal of eight hours. Before working with 11:11, however, the team had not been able to prove whether the organization could meet that mark.

Regular testing turned that recovery target into something OKFB could measure. The company can now verify recovery before a disaster forces the issue. The OKFB team can see systems come online, access servers, confirm functionality, and understand what recovery looks like in practice. During its most recent recovery test, OKFB brought critical systems online in just under an hour.

After the most recent test, David White, a Network Engineer at OKFB, told the team that, while he had been involved in recovery efforts before, he had never seen one move that fast. Not only did that test result beat the company's original eight-hour goal, but it tangibly proved the strength of OKFB's business continuity foundation.

"When I first got to OKFB a few years back, our executive leadership was asking to see a disaster recovery plan (DRP)," Kulman said. "They were saying, 'We need to know that you guys are testing, that you are auditing, and that you know exactly what you're going to do in case of a disaster.' And with the help of 11:11 Systems, we have been able to do that."

In OKFB's official business continuity plan, which it provides to executive leadership and board members, it promises users that its systems will be up and running within eight hours of a disaster event, such as a tornado or severe storm. But quarterly testing with 11:11 has given Kulman and team confidence that recovery can happen much faster.

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Lydia Kulman, Director of Information Systems at Oklahoma Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance

Keep Recovery Moving Even When Local Access Is At Risk

During a major weather event, OKFB's IT team may face the same disruption as the rest of the business. Connectivity may be limited. Facilities may be affected. Staff may be dealing with personal impacts while the company works to support policyholders.

Through the 11:11 Managed Recovery Program, OKFB moved beyond technology alone and gave its team a partner responsible for helping maintain recovery plans, manage testing, and support recovery execution when needed. The program gives OKFB a recovery partner beyond its own walls, reducing dependence on local access or internal availability during a regional disruption.

"As far as recovery goes, tornadoes are usually not small, insignificant events," Miller said. "Our connectivity may have been destroyed or diminished. Being able to contact someone at 11:11 to start the recovery and then be able to process it, that really is comforting."

Managed recovery also reduces pressure on a team already responsible for daily operations, projects, and urgent support needs. When something goes wrong, OKFB can bring 11:11 into the issue and keep company leadership informed while engineers work through the problem.

"I like the fact that we're not having to stop everything we're doing to try to put out a fire," Kulman said. "Knowing that we can say, '11:11 is working on it,' means it doesn't take any more of our resources to figure things out."

Extending 11:11 Partnership with AWS Direct Connect

Recently, when one of OKFB's technology vendors required the company change its connectivity model, the team saw it as an opportunity to expand their relationship with 11:11.

More specifically, the vendor no longer wanted OKFB to use a separate virtual private network (VPN) tunnel when connecting to its servers. Instead, it required the company connect through AWS. But the OKFB team did not have the in-house AWS knowledge or existing account structure in place to make this move comfortably on their own, and the vendor's requirement also came with a tight implementation deadline.

Luckily, the company did not have to start from scratch. Rather, they turned to a trusted partner—one that was already supporting OKFB's recovery environment—who also possessed the network expertise and strong relationship with AWS to get such a crucial project off the ground.

With 11:11 Managed Connectivity for AWS Direct Connect, OKFB gained support for a direct, secure connectivity model to AWS without having to carry the full design and implementation burden alone. The immediate value was practical: OKFB needed guidance, engineering support, and a path forward under deadline pressure.

"It was a unanimous decision. 11:11 already handled our disaster recovery. Why couldn't they do this?" Kulman said. "It gave us some relief, knowing that it didn't all fall on us. Knowing that 11:11 was going be able to walk us through this process."

The AWS Direct Connect project also reinforced the value of engineering collaboration. OKFB has brought 11:11 into technical discussions with external vendors, used its engineers to help work through unusual issues, and relied on the team to keep troubleshooting moving when the answer was not obvious.

In one recent example involving a Zerto upgrade, an 11:11 engineer dug into the logs and helped identify an IPv6 issue that had blocked the upgrade. The engineer kept working until the team found the cause.

"11:11 has helped us through a lot of puzzles," Kulman said. "They're not just leaving us dead in the water trying to figure it out for ourselves."

Practiced, Documented, And Ready

Over the years, OKFB has, thankfully, never had to declare a disaster and fail over to 11:11. But the true value comes from knowing what would happen if and when the day ever does arrive.

Through regular testing, OKFB has turned its recovery plan into a practiced process. Their recovery window is no longer a guess, and the people responsible for keeping the business running know their roles.

With 11:11 DRaaS for Zerto, the 11:11 Managed Recovery Program, and 11:11 Managed Connectivity for AWS Direct Connect, OKFB has built a tested, managed recovery strategy around the realities of the state it serves.

So, when the next storm comes, the plan is already in motion.