



## Farm Bureau-Western Computer Services

Building a service-based architecture

### Business Value

- Dynamic server provisioning and deployment
- 100% uptime
- Cost-effective high availability for every application
- Simple, verifiable disaster recovery
- Reduced administrative expenses

### Executive Summary

Western Computer Services, Inc. (WCS), a wholly owned subsidiary of Farm Bureau Financial Services (FBFS), has deployed PAN Manager® Software by Egenera® as the foundation for its new service-based architecture, serving multiple Farm Bureau Financial Services companies throughout the United States. After an extensive evaluation spanning some of the industry's largest systems companies, Farm Bureau-WCS chose Egenera to power the delivery and management of Web-based insurance services to thousands of personal and commercial insurance customers.

### Business Challenge

FBL Financial Group, Inc., through its subsidiary Farm Bureau Financial Services, engages in underwriting, marketing and distributing life insurance, annuities, and mutual funds to individuals and corporations in the Midwestern and Western sections of the United States. Farm Bureau Financial Services has nearly 2,200 employees and 1,900 agents throughout 15 states.

As a wholly owned subsidiary and key service provider to FBFS, WCS provides application solutions including deployment, management, and support for a growing list of FBFS entities. WCS' primary charter was to help move Farm Bureau to a service-oriented architecture, providing Web-based, real-time data for insurance processing for both commercial and individual claims.

Farm Bureau-WCS needed a solution with verifiable disaster recovery, guaranteed uptime and the critical ability to scale up and down quickly as new customers are added and new claims initiated, particularly during peak processing.

Based on past experiences, the IT team at Farm Bureau-WCS knew that a legacy approach to supporting this new service-based paradigm wouldn't work. So after an exhaustive review, Farm Bureau-WCS chose the Egenera system over competitive solutions for its inherent availability, agility, and flexibility, and the unparalleled ability to support the web-based delivery of mission-critical insurance applications over a standard architecture.

### Egenera Benefits

**Lower TCO:** Farm Bureau-WCS needs only three administrators to manage the new Web-based applications that serve thousands of commercial and individual customers. Now, according to Farm Bureau's manager of Infrastructure Technology, "minimal effort is required after deployment."

**Slashed Application Time-to-Market:** In a fast-paced market, getting new products to customers is critical. PAN Manager dramatically reduces the amount of time it takes Farm Bureau-WCS to deploy new applications.

**Assured High Availability:** With Egenera, Farm Bureau-WCS is able to cost-effectively make every application highly available, eliminating the need for dedicated standby servers. Instead, PAN Manager makes use of a failover pool that is available to multiple applications on a 24x7 basis.

**Adjustable Scalability:** Egenera's data center virtualization architecture increases server utilization. Instead of dedicating static servers to applications, services are dynamically provisioned from a pool of resources. Applications can easily be scaled up to meet demand or scaled down to optimize utilization.

**Verifiable Disaster Recovery:** PAN Manager stores configuration information for all servers within the SAN. In an emergency, the backup server takes over for any primary server in minutes. The backup server need not have the same processing resources as the primary server and can be used for less critical applications between emergencies to boost utilization and minimize costs.

# Finance

## Farm Bureau-Western Computer Services

### Focus on Disaster Recovery

Egenera's pioneering N+1 disaster recovery (DR) technology simplifies and accelerates moving entire clusters of servers, including their storage and networking connections, to a remote site. Leveraging Egenera's Processing Area Network (PAN) architecture, clusters are reinstated within minutes at the new site, without hardware configuration. A single back-up site can adopt the configuration of any number of primary sites on-demand. This unique approach provides complete and automatic DR at the lowest cost, without the physical and management complexities typical of physical replication approaches.

Specifically, while executing one of their DR tests during the product evaluation phase, the Farm Bureau's IT staff had restarted the application on a different system in three minutes. Under their prior infrastructure architecture, even planned downtime would require staff to build in two to three weeks to failover complex, legacy systems—and the actual move would have taken seven hours.

Farm Bureau's IT manager points out that, "With Egenera—in concert with 3PAR® storage—we were able to literally push a button and everything was up and running again. The speed that we now have to get customers back online again is amazing."

Currently, Farm Bureau-WCS uses application high availability, which allows them to consolidate multiple applications onto a single server, but gives them the flexibility to rapidly scale out the application architecture with a few mouse clicks in PAN Manager.

### Leveraging Egenera Professional Services

A key to Farm Bureau-WCS' success has been the involvement of Egenera Professional Services. Egenera Professional Services offers a complete suite of high-value consulting and knowledge services designed to help clients realize the technical, business, financial and time-to-market advantages of the Egenera architecture.

"In my experience with other vendors' professional service organizations, their primary goal seemed to be focused on making us more dependent on them for future projects – get in, fix the issue and get out with no real knowledge transfer," said the IT manager. "With Egenera, their goal isn't to make us dependent on them; it's to make us better."

Farm Bureau-WCS has engaged Egenera Professional Services to deliver the Utility Services Accelerator and Disaster Recovery Accelerator service offerings. The Utility Services Accelerator optimizes the configuration of applications onto the Egenera system to take advantage of its inherent virtualization capabilities, while the DR Accelerator deploys a documented, tested and 100% repeatable DR solution that reduces downtime to minutes and streamlines DR processes.

### Future Initiatives

Going forward, Farm Bureau-WCS aims to take advantage of new software technologies, including PAN vmBuilder™ Software by Egenera, which will further the trend towards doing more with less, keeping costs down and improving Service Level Agreements.

PAN vmBuilder gives customers the ability to take advantage of the same levels of high availability, N+1 failover, disaster recovery, dynamic repurposing and other critical services built into PAN Manager for both virtual and physical resources. Whether a customer is consolidating hundreds of application services onto virtual servers or deploying the most mission-critical applications on physical servers, Egenera is the first to eliminate both the management complexity and physical complexity plaguing enterprise data centers today, by providing a solution built to deliver agility and simplicity.

*"Based on what we've seen and experienced with Egenera—from technical capabilities to customer service and TCO—there was no reason to consider anything else."*

*Manager, Infrastructure Technology Services  
Farm Bureau – Western Computer Services, Inc.*



East Coast Headquarters  
Egenera, Inc.  
165 Forest Street  
Marlboro, MA 01752  
U.S.A.  
Main: 508-858-2600  
Sales: 508-858-3600  
Fax: 508-481-3114  
www.egenera.com

West Coast Headquarters  
Egenera, Inc.  
5201 Great America Parkway  
Suite 446  
Santa Clara, CA 95054  
U.S.A.  
Main: 408-748-1100  
Fax: 408-748-1101

Europe/Middle East/Africa  
Egenera Ltd.  
2nd Floor Titan Court  
3 Bishop Square  
Hatfield AL109NA  
United Kingdom  
Voice: +44 (0)1707 226097  
Fax: +44 (0)1707 226197  
www.egenera.com

Asia Pacific Headquarters  
Egenera, K.K.  
Shinjuku NS Bldg. 6F,  
2-4-1 Nishishinjuku,  
Shinjuku-ku  
Tokyo 163-0806 Japan  
Voice: +81-3-5321-7157  
Fax: +81-3-5321-7158  
japan.egenera.com