



*"It just doesn't make sense not to have something like this. Every business today should have some sort of high availability solution."*

Jeff Dupuy, I.S. manager, Unipres USA

## Business Profile

Company Name:  
Unipres U.S.A. Incorporated

Headquarters:  
Portland, Tennessee, USA

Industry:  
Automotive Manufacturing

Business Size:  
Annual Revenues: US \$22 Million  
Employees: 300

Business Environment:

- USA-based subsidiary of Global giant UNIPRES
- Systems support operations throughout North America
- Just in Time manufacturing requires that operations run 24/7/365
- Dispatches about 50 trucks daily

Implementation Team:

- The Genisys Group
- Unipres USA

Vision Solutions Products:

- iTERA HA

## Critical Issue

Unipres is the U.S. subsidiary of UNIPRES, a US\$ 2 Billion global automotive powerhouse based in Japan that manufactures parts for Nissan Motors, Subaru, Honda and many other well-known car companies. Unipres naturally must operate around the clock. If its systems stop for any reason, transaction processing has to be performed manually—where possible. Despite reverting to manual operations, many employees are idled and some may have to be sent home. Worse, in the just-in-time environment in which Unipres operates, lengthy downtime can have a serious impact on customers.

Unipres runs its primary business applications on one of the most reliable systems available, IBM i, but a highly reliability system was not enough to prevent application downtime. The company had to halt its applications nightly to take backups and to run batch jobs. These shutdowns were a considerable drain on Unipres' productivity.

## Results

- Nightly planned downtime eliminated
- Increased JIT productivity
- Easy to use and administer
- Peace of mind

## Technologies

- A combination of Infor™ and custom-developed software.
- DB2/400 running on IBM i
- iTERA HA
- 2 x IBM System i servers (one production, one backup)

## Business Challenge

Unipres depends on its IT systems to keep its business functioning around the clock. The company's IBM i-based applications include a mix of programs developed in-house and software from Infor that, together, deliver ERP, manufacturing, ordering and accounting functionality.

If the company's applications are unavailable, some work has to stop. Other work can be completed using manual processes, but those processes are very slow and inefficient. One might think that these would not be issues when using a highly reliable platform like the IBM i, but a reliable system isn't necessarily an available system.

In the past, Unipres had to halt its applications every night to take proper data backups and to perform daily accounting closings. Those shutdowns were a drain on the company's productivity.

In addition to this nightly planned downtime, Unipres also had to consider the possibility of unexpected system outages such as those that might result from an equipment failure or a disaster. With databases that hold almost two terabytes of data, recovery from offsite data backups would take considerable time should a disaster destroy the primary databases.



The cost of such an outage would be very high. Unipres hasn't done a detailed analysis of its downtime costs, but it estimates that a significant downtime event would cost the company thousands of dollars.

More importantly, in the event of downtime, "our customers usually had to suffer," said Jeff Dupuy, I.S. manager at Unipres USA. "With the economy the way it is, most of our customers want a guarantee that if we have a problem it won't impact their business because their stock levels are lower these days. If a problem on our end stops their lines, they'll fine us."

### Solution

Unipres realized that the way to solve its planned and unplanned downtime challenges was with a high availability (HA) solution. The company looked at a few alternatives, but it found that one solution shone above the others when it came to ease of use and affordability: iTERA HA, from Vision solutions.

The installation of iTERA HA was performed entirely by Unipres' IBM business partner, The Genisys Group, which is also a Vision Solutions business partner. Genisys also provided training for Unipres, ensuring that iTERA HA was quickly put to work protecting Unipres' data and applications and eliminating the need for planned and unplanned downtime.

Now, iTERA HA maintains a real-time replica of Unipres' IBM i-based applications and data on a second IBM i-based server. iTERA HA also makes it easy to rapidly failover or switchover to the hot-standby backup server whenever necessary.

Because the backup server contains a complete, up-to-date copy of all of the company's data, Unipres can now create its nightly backups on the secondary system, without any impact on the production server. As a result, the business can keep functioning around the clock without any drain on operational productivity.

Currently, both the production and backup servers are in the same facility in Nashville, Tennessee. However, because iTERA can seamlessly replicate data and applications either locally or remotely, the plan is to move the backup server to another facility in Forest, Mississippi. When that happens, in addition to eliminating the need for planned downtime, iTERA HA will also provide protection against downtime due to disasters.

With the two servers geographically separated, a disaster is unlikely to effect both locations. Consequently, if the primary data center is destroyed, users at Unipres' facilities across North America can be switched rapidly to the remote backup server, with minimal downtime.

At time of writing, Unipres had been using iTERA HA for only a couple of weeks, but it had already seen significant benefits. "Not taking the system down at night allows us to be more productive," said Dupuy. "We can now do shipments throughout the night and we don't have to schedule people around when the systems are available."

Probably the greatest benefit of iTERA HA is that it, "delivers peace of mind," declared Dupuy. "If we have a problem with one system we can swap to the other. That's a basic need in our industry—and in all industries. You just don't want to put all of your eggs in one basket.

"iTERA is a very good high availability solution for the iSeries and it's not very expensive—actually, it's very reasonable."



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