

# Strengthening Your County's Cyber Resilience

SCAC Annual Conference  
August 1, 2022



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# When Ransomware Strikes.....



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## How It Started

- Wednesday, January 20, 2021  
A macro-enabled spreadsheet opened by an employee
- Malware deployed Friday, January 23, 2021
- MIS staff alerted the following day (Saturday morning).
- County Administrator, PIO and Emergency Manager & HR alerted
- Systems shutdown



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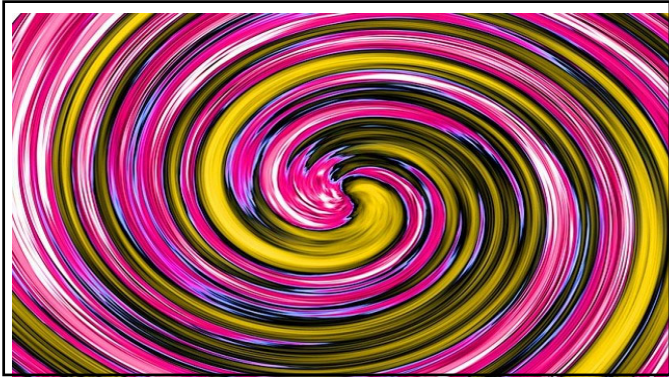
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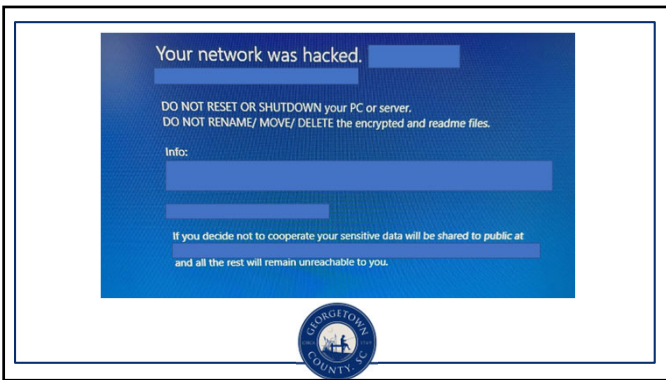
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### Who is on your response team?

- Have a plan and a team in place, just like you would for a natural disaster




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### Impacts

- All systems/computers in the county are down
- All email accounts are inaccessible (Access restored Feb. 19)
- Internet in all county facilities is shut down (Not restored until March 30)
- Phones and mobile devices are unaffected.
- Security updates are mandated.
- W-2s due January 31
- Payroll




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### Monday Morning

- Department leaders & Elected officials called individually and invited to a conference call
- A brief news release goes out with limited details due to open investigation
- Media frenzy began; nationally and internationally




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### Challenges

- Being transparent without releasing information not allowed by law enforcement or insurance company
- We are still dealing with COVID closures, a major website redevelopment and rolling out new public information initiatives
- Internal and external communications (3x weekly conference calls went on through April 2021)
- Unintended consequences
- Had to completely overhaul cyber security
  - Manual processes
  - New software



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### Computer Warfare



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### Team Georgetown County

➤ It takes a team (friends, partners and collaborators)



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## Transparency is Critical



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## Recovery

- 18 months later we're 95% there
- Total cost: more than \$400,000 – mostly covered by insurance
- Some data will never be recovered
- Now have minimum of 5 levels of security
- Ongoing education for staff
- "New normal"



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## Lessons Learned

- This could happen to anyone
- Don't underestimate the sophistication of "bad actors"
- Communication is key
- Recovery takes time and is EXPENSIVE
- Support IT upgrades
- Attacks happen on a regular basis
- Foster team building



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**Questions**



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**Feel Free to Reach Out**



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