

Finding the Goldilocks Zone

BY ROBERT SANDERS, PRESIDENT AND CEO, MANAGEDWAY

Data center concerns about incidents caused by nature, the climate, industrial issues or, God forbid, terrorism, pose a constant threat to businesses nationwide. Monitoring these concerns is always on the front burner.

The possibility of manmade or natural disasters – earthquakes, tornadoes, hurricanes, floods – give businesses reason to be supremely cautious about protecting their data so that regardless of what happens in the outside world, that data is guaranteed safe and accessible.

That's what makes the question of how far to locate a recovery data center from its primary data storage location such an important question for businesses today. How far is too far and, at the same time, how close is too close? Various studies have shown that the placement of a recovery site too far away from the main data center can be just as devastating as placing it too close.

Too close and maybe both sites go down at once. Too far and time and personnel issues can work against you. You've got to be as smart as Goldilocks and determine the distance that's "just right".

Whether it's near or far, your data managers and service technicians still need to be able to get there fast. If airplanes stop flying, there need to be easily accessible highways and railroad tracks to get you there. If voice data and internet communications go down, a physical presence is a must.

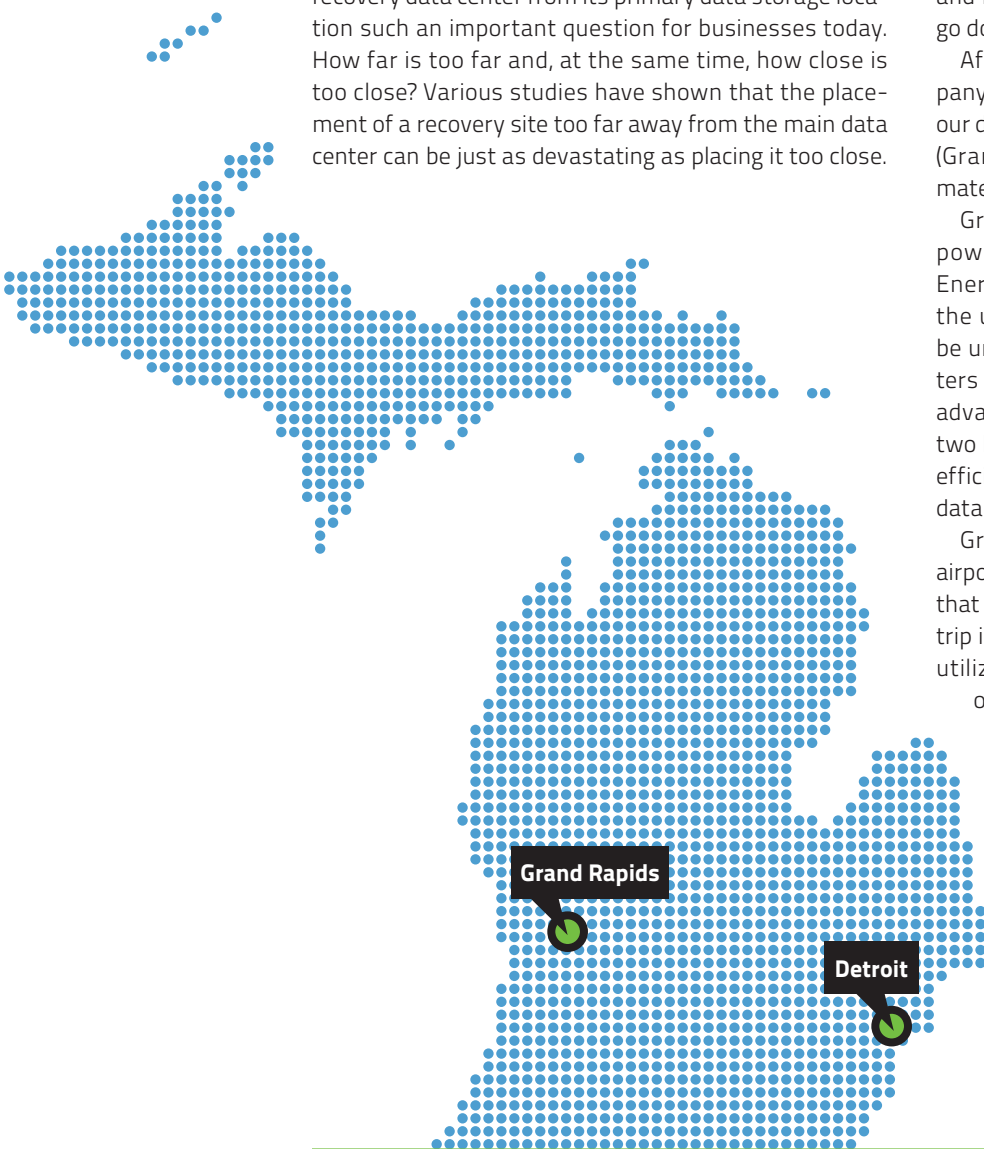
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After several years of research and study my company, ManagedWay, made a strategic decision to place our data centers in Southfield (Detroit) and Byron Center (Grand Rapids), MI., two cities separated by approximately 150 miles.

Grand Rapids and Detroit are on totally separate power grids from different companies (Consumers Energy in Grand Rapids; DTE Energy in Detroit) so in the unlikely event that one goes down, the other will be unaffected. This is absolutely critical. The two centers being 150 miles apart also provides technological advantages. It means that the latency between these two locations is just 5 milliseconds, making for fast and efficient communications. Lower latency means faster data transfers with less overhead.

Grand Rapids and Detroit are connected by major airports and rail lines and an interstate highway system that would enable our people to make the door-to-door trip in just over two hours. This allows ManagedWay to utilize the same knowledgeable team with the same obsession for great service in both locations in case of emergency or for routine maintenance.

Michigan's weather, while often colder than we'd like (which, incidentally, reduces operating costs in both centers) is stable thanks to the climate-moderating effect of the Great Lakes. Severe flooding is rare in this area which is dominated by numerous small streams that all empty quickly and directly into the Great Lakes with little risk of water backup (the National Flood Insurance Program rates our Southfield location as a moderate-to-low flood risk area, its best classification). No actual hurricane has ever



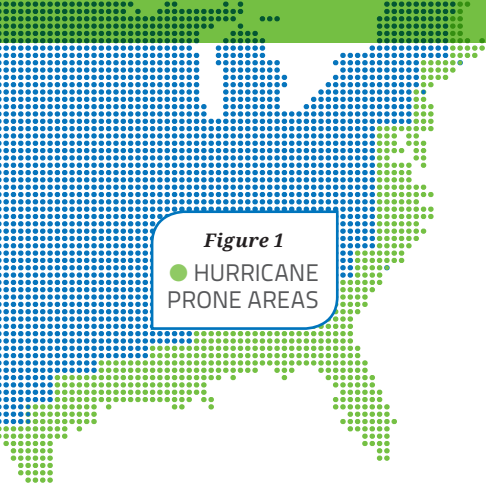


Figure 1
● HURRICANE PRONE AREAS

Figure 2

ANNUAL AVERAGE NUMBER OF TORNADES (1991-2010)

Texas 139	Minnesota 25	Wyoming.....11	Oregon2
Oklahoma 57	Colorado.....22	Virginia10	Utah2
Florida 55	Georgia.....22	New Mexico.....9	Washington.....2
Kansas 55	Indiana 22	Montana7	West Virginia.....2
Nebraska 45	North Dakota 22	New York7	Connecticut1
Iowa.....37	Wisconsin 20	Maryland6	Delaware.....1
Illinois 35	North Carolina19	California5	Hawaii1
Missouri 30	Michigan 17	Arizona.....4	Nevada1
South Dakota 29	Ohio15	Idaho.....3	Rhode Island1
Louisiana27	Tennessee15	Massachusetts.....3	Vermont1
Mississippi.....27	South Carolina14	New Jersey3	Alaska.....0
Alabama..... 25	Kentucky.....12	Maine2	
Arkansas..... 25	Pennsylvania12	New Hampshire.....2	

Source: NOAA/National Climatic Data Center

With 150 miles between [Detroit and Grand Rapids], it's almost impossible to imagine the same tornado striking both markets.

been observed in Michigan. As shown in Figure 1, we're well off the beaten hurricane track.

The extraordinarily rare earthquakes the state has experienced have had minimal impact. We're also just north of "Tornado Alley" making us an unlikely tornado target, and with 150 miles between the two cities, it's almost impossible to imagine the same tornado striking both markets.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association lists the Warren-Troy-Farmington Hills area, which includes our data center in Southfield, as one of its top

ManagedWay's headquarters and primary data center is in Southfield, MI., one of the ten safest cities from natural disasters.

ten safest U.S. cities from natural disasters. And, Detroit is listed in the top five for "market accessibility", defined as the metro area with access to the greatest percentage of Americans living within 500 miles. According to county statistics, Detroit can access half of all Americans within this radius.

As far as I've been able to determine, there are no hard and fast rules about the ideal distance between a primary and back-up or recovery data site. There are guidelines but they seem to be more nebulous than definite, i.e., not too far, not too close. One definite rule of thumb is that the sites should at least be far enough apart that they aren't subject to the same risks...but not so far apart that they become inaccessible on a timely basis.

Our Grand Rapids facility easily meets those criteria. In addition we have the capability to service Grand

Rapids as a primary location with or without systems from Detroit. If Detroit for some reason wasn't running Grand Rapids would continue operations making it not only a disaster recovery site but a fully functional geographically redundant primary site.

Our significant investment in Grand Rapids is our vote of confidence that we're in exactly the right place for ourselves and for our clients. We have a highly trained professional workforce 24x7x365 that can be triggered between one site and the other at a moment's notice and we have backup systems in place to protect every system we house. We certainly aren't hoping for a disaster to prove ourselves...but we're entirely ready for one if it comes. We think we've identified the Goldilocks formula.

Contact us today to determine how we can meet your company's managed hosting needs.

Call (888) 745-6948 or email info@managedway.com.



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