

SUCCESS STORY

Town of Kill Devil Hills Protects a Coastal Community's Lifelines with AI-Driven Defense

Town of Kill Devil Hills | kdhnc.com

North Carolina, USA | State and local government | 125 full-time staff supporting over 7,000 year-round residents

TrendAI Vision One™ solutions: Cyber Risk Exposure Management (CREM), Security Operations, Email and Collaboration Security, Cloud Security

Partner: CDW

The challenge

Keeping emergency services and residents safe against modern threats

On North Carolina's Outer Banks, The Town of Kill Devil Hills is a close-knit coastal community where year-round residents share the shoreline with millions of annual visitors. The area is rich in history, most famously as the place where the Wright brothers first took flight. As the heart of the region, it depends on reliable public services to keep its community and busy beaches safe. That responsibility falls to IT Manager Caleb Burrus, who oversees everything from fire, police, and ocean rescue systems to the supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) controllers that power the town's water plant. "Keeping the town secure comes down to three things: visibility, observability, and resiliency. Our emergency services rely on their equipment working so they can serve the community," says Burrus.

As technology advances, Burrus faced a growing challenge. Aging radios and pagers still support emergency communications, while AI-driven phishing and rapidly disclosed vulnerabilities have made cybersecurity more demanding than ever. "You cannot wait two weeks to patch anymore. Protecting against AI-based threats requires having your own defensive AI arsenal, ready 24/7," says Burrus. Unifying that protection across the town's environment became his priority.

The solution

Complete visibility from a single console

Today, the town uses TrendAI Vision One™ to bring endpoint, email, cloud, and cyber risk data together in one place, giving Burrus a complete view of the environment and helping him quickly understand and respond to potential threats. "Visibility is the biggest advantage of the platform. TrendAI™ collects telemetry from any device with an agent and has strong third-party integration capabilities," Burrus says. "Instead of parsing data across platforms and interfaces, I get coherent insights straight from TrendAI Vision One's dashboards."

Staying ahead of emerging vulnerabilities

AI threat research now surfaces critical flaws faster than vendors can patch them, and Burrus can't wait weeks for fixes across aging systems. He ranks the town's exposures with TrendAI Vision One™ Cyber Risk Exposure Management, flagging what TrendAI™ has already mitigated, while virtual patching protects the rest. "Virtual patching is my favorite feature. Vendors can take weeks or months to patch a critical flaw. Virtual patching sits in between, protecting us and alerting us the moment a malicious actor tries to exploit a gap," says Burrus.



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Caleb Burrus

IT Manager, Town of Kill Devil Hills

Connecting alerts across the environment

Every signal in the town's environment feeds into TrendAI Vision One™ Agentic SIEM, from a simple syslog forward to an API connection. Paired with XDR, it ties identities, devices, and network segments together. "When an alert comes in, I'm not just looking at one device in isolation, I can see the broader activity around it. TrendAI Vision One shows me what else happened, what systems were involved, and what needs attention. Instead of switching between multiple tools, everything is connected in one place, and investigations that used to take hours now take minutes," says Burrus.

Results

Investigation time reduced from hours to minutes

The gains show up in time saved during a workday. A compromised password once meant hours of chasing down the user, resetting access, and re-registering multi-factor authentication by hand. "It could take weeks to identify a risk, hours to understand whether it was a true positive, and even longer to understand the impact. TrendAI performs investigations automatically in real time," adds Burrus. "With their playbooks, even complicated attacks can be stopped without manual intervention, and for events that still need review, what took hours between disparate systems now takes minutes."

For a one-person team, the reclaimed time is the return. "The time TrendAI saves me means I can spend more energy on the things that move the town forward: modernizing our technology, improving our processes, and helping move the town forward," says Burrus. The industry-leading AI security platform also flagged that about a quarter of staff were using unsanctioned AI tools, which is helping shape the town's first formal AI policy.

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Customer service as a differentiator

Innovation backed by partnership

For Burrus, having a trusted security partner means having access to expertise, guidance, and innovation as the threat landscape evolves. He values the ongoing investment that helps him strengthen the town's security posture and prepare for emerging threats. "I have never had such a thoughtful team invest in our organization. Support is proactive and consistent," he says. That ease extends to procurement, where channel partner CDW handles vendor negotiations and licensing so he can focus on security rather than bargaining for price.

Burrus also points to the TrendAI™ broader commitment to innovation, from proactive threat research insights from the TrendAI™ Zero Day Initiative™ (ZDI) to partnerships with leading AI companies such as Anthropic. Seeing the company invest in technologies and intelligence that can strengthen defenders gives him confidence in the road ahead. "Knowing TrendAI has access to tools beyond what attackers have gives real peace of mind. Their investment in research, innovation, and emerging technologies gives defenders like me a meaningful advantage," says Burrus.

Transform your cybersecurity approach

Learn how other organizations like the Town of Kill Devil Hills are empowered to AI fearlessly with TrendAI Vision One™.

Learn more today.

trendaisecurity.com

About TrendAI™

TrendAI™, the global AI security leader and enterprise business unit of Trend Micro, empowers organizations with full AI visibility and consolidated security that inspires confidence, drives innovation, and eliminates risk. Trusted by the largest enterprises and governments across 185 countries, TrendAI™ secures the entire organization, from identities to infrastructure to data. AI Fearlessly. trendaisecurity.com