

# Pita Pit

## Fresh Thinking. Healthy Eating



### A Day Like No Other

August 10, 2016 started with a relaxing day of golf. It ended with a crisis. The likes of which Peter Riggs and Brenda Zosel Bookholtz, had ever seen.

"I was just getting home after a nice round of golf when my phone started blowing up," said Zosel Bookholtz, VP of Accounting and Finance. "Friends were texting me, 'Hey! Is your office on fire?'"

Riggs, CEO / President, was also receiving a slew of calls from employees and friends. "I had messages saying, 'Pete! Your building is on fire!'", Riggs said. Driving to Pita Pit's headquarters, Riggs could also see a line of smoke rising from downtown.

Zosel Bookholtz's first priority was accounting for all Pita Pit employees. Her next thought? "I hope we have backups."

Pita Pit had decided years ago to bring their IT backup process in-house. Firemen were putting out the initial flames, when each realized the backups were in the IT managers office. In the same building that was on fire!

"Our headquarters are in a 126-year-old building, with no sprinklers or anything," Zosel Bookholtz said. "Thankfully, we knew exactly where the hard drives should be. A City of Coeur d'Alene fireman was gracious enough to retrieve them for us."

A third-party consultant verified the data. He also determined the date of the most recent backup. The result? The last backup had taken place on August 17, 2015—almost a full year before the fire.

"We discovered our IT team was conducting regular backups of our data. They believed they were taking place, but hadn't confirmed it," Riggs said. "Brenda and I both had minor heart attacks. We asked ourselves, 'How do we start again?'"

**Industry:** Restaurants  
**Intermax Customer Since:** 2006

Pita Pit founders believed people were seeking a fresher and healthier alternative to fast food. Born in Canada in 1995, Dr. Jack Riggs, Pita Pit's Executive Chairman, brought the company to Coeur d'Alene in 2005. He opened its U.S. headquarters and training center. The employees support Pita Pit franchisees nationwide.



*Intermax Networks has built the largest independent fiber and private microwave data network in North Idaho. We provide internet, digital phone, transport connections and Point-to-Point circuits connecting North Idaho to places all across Idaho and the Northwest. Intermax supplies more than 2,500 customers with service on a monthly basis, from individual residences to major infrastructure connections for business, government health care and schools.*

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## Starting Over

They started again by calling Pat Whalen, VP and CTO of Intermax Networks, for help. Whalen's first step was to determine if any data on the now charred server was salvageable. No easy task. The fire department investigators needed the scene kept intact.

The company relocated to the Coeur d'Alene Mines building on the following Monday. Intermax's fiber internet serves the site.

"Pat researched options for us," Zosel Bookholtz said. "He and the team took care of everything. By Monday morning Intermax had replicated our entire network, complete with virtual servers, permissions, shared drives, everything. It was amazing! Everything worked. We were up and running and I was very happy."

Riggs agreed. Intermax went above and beyond on many occasions to help Pita Pit through the fire and its aftermath.

"Whenever I would call, someone would answer," Riggs said. "At one point, Pat was hiking when I called. He stopped mid-hike and drove to our office to help. We even gave the Intermax team their own security code for our office doors."

Pita Pit's information was restored two months following the fire. Six individual files were lost, from among terabytes of data. Operations were back to normal; albeit in a different location.

## Lessons Learned

"Always have offsite backup," said Riggs. You can't put a price tag on it. An offsite server is invaluable."

Pita Pit uses Intermax's data center. The company's data resides on a physical server and in the cloud. The team can visit their servers 24/7/365. The initial concerns of losing prompt and secure access to data never materialized.

Riggs, a self-proclaimed technology hobbyist likes "having technology that people are unaware of." He believes most people don't understand technology. They avoid thinking about it until something happens. Failing to invest today can lead to dire consequences tomorrow.

"Before things like this happen, no-one thinks the investments are worth it," he said. "After a catastrophe, you don't need to understand the reasons you need to make the investment, you just know you need to make it."

Another silver lining? A truer appreciation for the role technology plays in making everyday tasks easier. There is a newfound confidence in the Pita Pit team's resilience to face any new challenges head-on.

"Intermax not only helped us find solutions, the support and service we received in the aftermath of the fire made us feel great," Zosel Bookholtz said. "It's a great feeling to be able to say, 'We've got people who know what they're doing. They can help us...like a safety net so we don't have to face situations like this alone ever again.'"



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- PETER RIGGS

