

Energy Company Adopts New Security Strategy to Reduce Risk, Better Protect Oracle Databases



Suburban Propane®

Client Profile: Suburban Propane provides more than 1.1 million residential, commercial, industrial and agricultural customers with propane, fuel oil and other refined fuels and energy services through 675 locations in 41 states.

Industry: Energy

Geography: Headquartered in Whippany, New Jersey

Revenue: \$1.1 billion USD

Employees: 3,800

Products Supported:

Oracle Database 11.2.0.3

Hyperion 11.1.2

PeopleSoft HCM 9.1

PeopleTools 8.54

"We turned to independent support to help reduce costs and improve service. With a virtual patching strategy recommended by Rimini Street Global Security Services, we found we could also significantly boost database security and reduce overall risk."

Ron Traub

Senior Operations Manager
Suburban Propane

The Suburban Propane Challenge

As Suburban Propane investigated options to reduce operational costs and align business needs, the company realized its security strategy needed improvement. Suburban Propane had previously struggled to apply Oracle Critical Patch Updates (CPUs) to help secure its databases against known vulnerabilities. CPUs were often released months after vulnerabilities had been discovered — so companies depending on CPUs could be vulnerable until patches were published and applied.

After CPUs became available, installing them meant time-consuming regression testing and worse, scheduling maintenance windows to bring critical systems down to apply patches.

"Bringing critical systems down in order to apply a patch was problematic, and we didn't have the resources to perform time-consuming regression testing, so our patching was late and infrequent at best," explains Ron Traub, senior operations manager for Suburban Propane. "Our previous security strategy wasn't practical, making our databases vulnerable. We knew vendor patches were frequently delayed, plus we couldn't test and apply them quickly. Even if all the stars aligned, our system wasn't equipped to alert us to an attack on our database!"

The Rimini Street Solution

Moving to Rimini Street, Suburban Propane immediately received a reduction in its annual Oracle Database support fees by 50 percent and more responsive support.

"Support for Oracle Database cost savings were a major factor," Traub notes. "But being able to call our assigned Primary Support Engineer (PSE) and speak directly to a senior-level expert clinched the deal."

"Rimini Street Global Security Services recommended virtual patching to boost database security, reduce risk and enable us to stay on stable, reliable releases. After evaluating our options, we chose Rimini Street Advanced Database Security enhanced with technology from McAfee," he says.

Benefits

- **Saved 50 percent on Oracle Database support, helping fund improved security:** Suburban Propane can continue to run its applications and database for years to come, fully supported with performance tuning and customization support, at 50 percent of its previous annual Oracle Database support fees.
- **Improved security monitoring and reduced risk:** Suburban Propane leveraged Rimini Street Advanced Database Security to reduce risk and avoid business disruption.
- **Protected multiple databases rapidly:** Suburban Propane applies virtual patches to protect against vulnerabilities almost immediately once an update is available, without needing to modify code or schedule downtime.

“By combining virtual patching with real-time monitoring plus independent support for Oracle Database, we are more protected and better supported than ever before.”

Ron Traub
Senior Operations Manager
Suburban Propane

For More Information

To learn more about Suburban Propane or to read other client success stories, visit www.riministreet.com/clients.

Client Results

With independent support for [Oracle Database](#), in addition to saving 50 percent of its previous annual Oracle Database support fees, Suburban Propane significantly reduced operational costs by receiving support for custom code in addition to the base code and performance tuning at no additional fee. Plus, the company relies on Rimini Street to solve problems instead of resolving issues on its own.

Suburban Propane also avoided a costly and disruptive upgrade to Oracle 12c that would be necessary to remain fully supported. Although Oracle Database 11.2.0.3 is covered by Oracle Extended Support, it is no longer eligible for new break/fix or security patches due to Oracle’s terminal patch policy. [Rimini Street supports all releases of Oracle Database](#) and if business needs change, Suburban Propane preserved its ability to upgrade with an archive that was created during the onboarding process. In fact, after moving to Rimini Street, Suburban Propane successfully upgraded its PeopleTools — the toolset that supports PeopleSoft software.

“When we upgraded to PeopleTools 8.54, we hit roadblocks,” Traub says. “Before, we could not have resolved the issues in a timely manner, but Rimini Street responded quickly with the right answers.”

Suburban Propane leveraged its support savings to fund a more comprehensive and practical security strategy. Implementing [Rimini Street Advanced Database Security](#) immediately improved protection, with new security software up and running in a test environment in less than a day.

“Rimini Street Advanced Database Security gives us peace of mind,” Traub explains. “As soon as a virtual patch is released, we can apply it quickly. No need to schedule a maintenance window to bring a system down — and we don’t have to change code and perform regression testing.”

“Virtual patch updates are available within 48 hours of the discovery of a vulnerability or release of a vendor patch,” adds Rick Montalbano, database administrator for Suburban Propane. “Virtual patches even protect against some unknown vulnerabilities, like SQL injections, that vendor patches can’t address, and it alerts us to attacks.”

“At the start, Advanced Database Security alerted us that our PeopleSoft database was being accessed by an admin user who was actually a developer,” Montalbano explains. “That’s not a best practice, so we immediately created the right user permissions for that account and eliminated an issue we had not been aware of.”

Suburban Propane is pleased with its prompt protection and newfound monitoring capabilities. “By combining virtual patching with real-time monitoring plus independent support,” says Traub, “we are more protected and better supported than ever before.”

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