



## AGL Resources Relies On F5 Products For Application Traffic Management, Link Load Balancing and Secure Remote Access

### Customer Profile

**Company Name:**

AGL Resources

**Location:**

Atlanta, Georgia

**Industry:**

Energy services

**Web site:**

<http://www.aglresources.com/>

**Company information:**

- Approximately 2100 employees
- Major energy service holding company, including utility subsidiaries Atlanta Gas Light Company, Virginia Natural Gas and Chattanooga Gas Company
- Serves approximately 1.8 million customers in three states

**About AGL Resources**

AGL Resources (NYSE: ATG) is an Atlanta-based energy services holding company, and was named 2003 Gas Company of the Year by Platts Global Energy Awards. Houston-based subsidiary Sequent Energy Management provides natural gas asset management and producer services.

As a member of the SouthStar partnership, AGL Resources markets natural gas to consumers in Georgia under the Georgia Natural Gas brand. AGL Networks, the company's telecommunications subsidiary, owns and operates fiber optic networks in Atlanta and Phoenix.

### Executive Summary

AGL Resources, an Atlanta-based energy services holding company, relies on four different F5 products to support their growing infrastructure investments and to improve their ROI. Products include the BIG-IP® Application Traffic Management system, the FirePass® Secure Remote Access device, the BIG-IP® Link Controller, and soon, the 3-DNS® Controller. All four, in varying degrees, help AGL Resources secure, optimize and deliver their applications reliably and cost-effectively to any user, anywhere in the world, using any device.

### Challenge

When it comes to adopting technologies to support their Web presence, AGL Resources' approach is to find best-of-breed solutions. So when the time came to find best practices solutions to better support and leverage their Web infrastructure investment, AGL Resources turned to F5 Networks.

"It's more of a total package with F5," said Greg Spence, Lead Network Engineer for AGL Resources. "They have 10 years in the business, and have always been one of the top two companies technology-wise, and viewed as a consistent innovator."

When Spence needed to support AGL Resources' growing Web infrastructure and to better utilize its server and application resources, he turned to F5's BIG-IP Application Traffic Management product. When he needed to support 600 mobile users out on the road who required reliable secure remote access to corporate information, he chose F5's FirePass. When he required better utilization of AGL Resources' million-dollar-a-year frame relay network, he brought in F5's BIG-IP Link Controller product. And soon, to ensure disaster recovery across sites around the globe, he'll introduce F5's 3-DNS global traffic manager into the mix.

### Solution

#### BIG-IP Application Traffic Management

The BIG-IP system provides the most intelligent and adaptable means to secure and optimize applications, enabling organizations to effectively and competitively run their business. It ensures that applications are always available, reduces server costs through a rich set of infrastructure optimization capabilities, and ensures greater network and application security.

Spence brought in BIG-IP to better support AGL Resources' infrastructure investment, specifically a new Web application designed for the mission-critical purpose of supporting an interface into customer information at AGL Resources.

BIG-IP allowed AGL Resources to significantly reduce the amount of infrastructure they required, saving them over 20% in Web server costs on the front end of the application they had deployed -- resulting in an immediate ROI. "We can offload a certain percentage of technology processing overhead onto BIG-IP, and therefore better utilize a fewer number of Web server resources," added Spence.

**FirePass Controller**

AGL Resources also relies on F5's FirePass® Controller to support a growing number of people working from home or on the road that need to reliably and securely access corporate applications. FirePass is a SSL-VPN appliance that installs quickly, offers an intuitive, familiar browser-based interface, and uses standard SSL encryption and Web-browser technology to overcome access challenges - regardless of environment. It enables companies to extend secure remote access to anyone connected to the Internet using desktops, laptops, PDAs, kiosks and more - while eliminating the need for complex IPsec VPNs.

"We brought in FirePass as a strategic and technical solution," said Spence. "Technically, it solved a lot of secure remote access issues our users often faced when traveling or working from home. Strategically, we are using it to support the deployment of 700 field service data terminals that interface in real-time with AGL Resources' gas systems."

Spence added, "Because SSL is a clientless solution, there's a lot of advantages inherent over traditional legacy IPsec and its complex client requirements, as well as the required support resources associated with deploying and maintaining that client."

Both end user and management reaction to the FirePass solution has been extremely positive.

"We haven't had a single complaint and users are generally ecstatic about the performance and simplicity of their remote access, as opposed to IPsec," said Spence. "Eventually, we'll have up to 600 mobile users. And they're all operating over a public network, so that exemplifies our level of trust in FirePass to handle security in such an environment. There was also a significant resource savings we achieved with FirePass, in terms of lower management and administrative costs."

**BIG-IP Link Controller**

As AGL Resources increases their use of the Internet to deliver their business-critical applications, maintaining only one link to the public network represents a single point of failure and serious network vulnerability. That's why AGL Resources also relies on F5's BIG-IP Link Controller. It seamlessly monitors availability and performance of multiple WAN connections to intelligently manage bi-directional traffic flows to a site - providing fault tolerant, optimized Internet access. It enables reliable WAN connections for business grade Internet connectivity, ensures traffic is directed over the best possible link and ISP, maintains the highest quality of service and speed for users, and maximizes ROI for corporate connectivity by allowing organizations to aggregate inexpensive links.

"We employ Link Controllers to better leverage a multi-host, fifty-site, million dollar-a-year frame relay network," stated Spence. "They allow us to better utilize our investment by 30 to 40%. That is, because our network was engineered in a certain way, full utilization would have been difficult without the Link Controllers' help."

**3-DNS Global Traffic Management**

AGL Resources is also about to implement F5's 3-DNS® Controller. 3-DNS provides wide-area (global) traffic management and high availability of IP applications/services running across multiple data centers, ensuring the highest possible availability for a site.

In addition to performing comprehensive site availability checks, 3-DNS will also allow AGL Resources to define the conditions for shifting all traffic to a backup data center, failing over their entire site, or controlling only those affected applications.

"In the event of a disaster, 3-DNS will significantly decrease our recovery time," said Spence. "It also provides almost real-time failover in the hot-site scenario, decreasing lost revenues due to down time. Also, because disaster recovery is mandated by the PSC (Public Services Commission), 3-DNS will help us meet and exceed this requirement."

Finally, it wasn't just F5 technology that impressed Spence and AGL Resources. The F5 service and support behind those products was equally exemplary.



"The service has just been outstanding," said Spence. "I haven't had a single bad experience with service. As a matter of fact, it's probably the best service I receive from the vendors that I deal with on a regular basis."

### About F5

F5 enables organizations to successfully deliver business-critical applications and gives them the greatest level of agility to stay ahead of growing business demands. As the pioneer and global leader in Application Traffic Management, F5 continues to lead the industry by driving more intelligence into the network to deliver advanced application agility. F5 products ensure the secure and optimized delivery of applications to any user - anywhere. Through its flexible and cohesive architecture, F5 delivers unmatched value by dramatically improving the way organizations serve their employees, customers and constituents, while lowering operational costs. Over 6,000 organizations and service providers worldwide trust F5 to keep their businesses running. The company is headquartered in Seattle, Washington with offices worldwide. For more information, go to [www.f5.com](http://www.f5.com).