SUCCESS STORIES

from Safe Systems®

AMERICAN PRIDE BANK

Learn how American Pride Bank streamlined their processes and improved their compliance reporting with Safe Systems' **ISOversight™ virtual ISO solution**

Location	Asset Size	Problem	Solution
Macon, Georgia	**$195 Million**	The bank needed a VISO to help streamline reporting and ensure the institution is up to date on all information security activities.	**ISOversight™** Virtual ISO (VISO)

The Challenge

Today's banking environment is a complex one: cybersecurity threats are constantly emerging; the way that institutions manage their sensitive customer data is continually evolving; more and more third parties are involved in storing and processing data; and regulators continue to update guidance and reporting requirements. Having an effective **information security officer (ISO)** within the institution to manage these challenges has become essential. However, community bank ISOs often struggle to keep up with the growing number of responsibilities this role requires – often forced to manage critical tasks with limited resources and a lack of segregation of duties.

Nicole Rinehart, former chief operations officer at American Pride Bank, ran into this very issue as the **sole IT admin** at American Pride Bank. Managing all of the ISO responsibilities, including critical activities such as Board reporting and the production of comprehensive reports for examiners, was difficult to manage due to the many manual processes required.

"As a small bank, we couldn't justify hiring another staff member to help us segregate the ISO duties at the time," said John Hall, CEO and president at American Pride Bank. "We needed to identify a more robust process internally to **meet regulatory requirements** and monitor our ISO activities to ensure they were completed accurately and efficiently."

During a regulatory examination, the examiner recommended the bank focus on having more independence within its ISO duties. The Federal Financial Institution Examination Council (FFIEC) also states that all financial institutions must have **separation of duties** for the ISO role. To accomplish this, the bank began evaluating solutions to help streamline processes and ensure complete oversight of all information security activities.

"After our exam, we knew we needed some support to ensure all ISO responsibilities were managed efficiently," said Rinehart. "We needed a solution to help us streamline manual processes, closely monitor ISO duties, identify areas of risk, and effectively report on the entire process."

The Solution

While attending Safe Systems' NetConnect Customer Success Conference, Rinehart was introduced to the **ISOversight™ virtual ISO (VISO) solution**, which provides a software as a service (SaaS) bundle of compliance applications and extensive compliance knowledge to augment the ISO role. The solution includes:

- **audit management**
- **business continuity planning**
- **a cybersecurity assessment tool**
- **vendor management applications**
- **and an information security program**

These features were designed to help financial institutions cover the areas ISOs are required to oversee as outlined by the FFIEC's **IT Examination Handbook**.

After careful evaluation, American Pride Bank decided to partner with Safe Systems to support its VISO initiatives. The bank was already leveraging Safe Systems' Cybersecurity RADAR™, BCP Blueprint™, and Vendor Management applications, and with an additional audit management tool and full information security program, the complete solution rolled all of the bank's key information into one centralized location for easy monitoring and reporting.

"As the only person handling the ISO responsibilities at the bank, the ISOversight solution has helped me tremendously to have more eyes on the process and work together with a full team to manage ISO activities," said Rinehart. "It's challenging to manage all of the information security items when I'm also trying to put out fires and cover other aspects of the bank at the same time. Working with Safe Systems, the compliance team is always available when I need them, and they provide us with a **complete checklist** to ensure we are staying on track with our monthly, quarterly, and annual ISO priorities."

In addition to the compliance apps, ISOversight provides an information security program with **full compliance support**. Safe Systems conducts monthly touchpoint meetings to assess the status of all information security activities and develops a comprehensive summary report designed to provide the institution's management committee with timely, accurate, and relevant information.

"The **regular meetings and detailed reporting** have really helped our executive management and department managers become more involved in this process, which allows us to better identify and track risk and make sure we are meeting all of our goals internally," said Hall. "I've been very impressed by the level of detail and how we're able to follow up on all of our items without Nicole having to carry all of the responsibility. All of our key team members are involved in making sure everything has been assigned and completed properly, and it's made all the difference for us."

The Results

With ISOversight, American Pride Bank has improved its overall preparation and communication of the information security program. All key stakeholders in the bank have access to ISO-related items in real-time, and the information security program is **more organized and streamlined**, enabling the bank to save time on monitoring and reporting.

"In the past, Nicole had to pull from different portals to gather spreadsheets and other documents, and now all important information is in **one centralized location**, where everyone can monitor and be more engaged with the program," said John. "With this solution, the oversight of the ISO duties is no longer an issue, and puts processes in place to add the separation of duties required in the FFIEC guidelines."

With comprehensive detailed reporting, the bank has realized a more than 50%-time savings in terms of manual processes. Previously, pulling reports for the Board, senior management, examiners and auditors took five to seven days to complete, but with ISOversight, the time has decreased to just two days. The solution has also made **managing policies** incredibly easy for the bank. Safe Systems makes the policy changes as soon as a new policy comes out, so bank staff doesn't have to worry about updating this information to maintain compliance.

"The ISOversight solution has been a game changer for our bank because now we have a robust process in place working with Safe Systems and a full committee of our team members to ensure all tasks are completed accurately and nothing slips through the cracks," said Rinehart. "It's so important to have a process like this, especially when you have limited resources. Safe Systems has truly become **an extension of our internal team**, helping us to stay on track with ISO responsibilities and ensuring we're in compliance with all regulatory requirements."

About American Pride Bank

American Pride Bank is a full-service, locally owned and managed community bank, offering business and personal banking products and services, with two branches in Macon, one in Warner Robins and another in Athens, Georgia. The bank also has an SBA loan production office in Atlanta. For additional information about American Pride Bank, please visit https://www.americanpridebank.com/.

About Safe Systems

Safe Systems was founded in 1993 to provide compliance-centric IT and security solutions exclusively to financial institutions. The company has become one of the leaders in the industry, managing hundreds of financial institutions representing more than $61 billion in combined assets, 1,100 locations and more than 20,000 network devices. Safe Systems' IT network management services are the bridge between the core and other third-party applications. These cost effective solutions include IT support and managed services, internal network/cloud design and installation, hosted email, business continuity and disaster recovery, compliance consulting, security services, and IT and compliance training. Safe Systems helps financial institutions to significantly decrease costs, increase performance, and improve their compliance posture. For additional information about Safe Systems, Inc., please visit www.safesystems.com or call (404) 752-0550.