# **KAMO Power: Technical Infrastructure and Security Posture Analysis**

**Executive Summary:**

KAMO Power, a Generation and Transmission (G&T) cooperative established in 1941, plays a vital role in supplying power to 17 member distribution cooperatives across northeast Oklahoma and southwest Missouri 1. A central theme evident in the cooperative's operations is its commitment to delivering "safe, low-cost, reliable power" to its members 1. This core principle likely shapes their strategic decisions regarding technology adoption and security investments, potentially favoring well-established and proven solutions. Analysis of publicly available information reveals ongoing initiatives to modernize their network infrastructure and adopt cloud services. Their operational technology environment includes critical SCADA systems, and while specific security incidents are not publicly disclosed, their adherence to industry regulations suggests a focus on maintaining a robust security posture.

**KAMO Power Overview:**

Established in 1941, KAMO Power operates as a Generation and Transmission (G&T) cooperative 1. The cooperative is owned by the 17 member distribution cooperatives it serves across northeast Oklahoma and southwest Missouri, providing them with essential power supply resources 1. KAMO Power is also a part of a larger network, being one of the six G&T utilities that collectively own Associated Electric Cooperative, Inc. (AECI) 1. The operational structure involves a three-tiered system where distribution cooperatives at the top deliver power to their members, KAMO Power in the middle provides power and related services through its high-voltage transmission, and AECI forms the base as the power generator 3. This structure likely fosters a degree of collaboration in technology and security strategies, with KAMO Power potentially offering standardized solutions to its member cooperatives.

Beyond its core power transmission role, KAMO Power also operates a wholly-owned subsidiary named K-Powernet 4. Established to leverage KAMO Power's existing communications assets, K-Powernet provides a range of telecommunication services, including affordable and reliable internet and a backhaul network for various entities such as member cooperatives, mobile carriers, schools, healthcare providers, government agencies, and businesses 4. This venture into telecommunications signifies a strategic utilization of their extensive fiber optic network, which spans nearly 4,000 miles across four states 6. This dual nature of their infrastructure, supporting both power delivery and broadband services, creates opportunities for synergy but also introduces complexities in terms of management and security protocols.

**Technical Infrastructure Analysis:**

While specific details regarding KAMO Power's Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems are not publicly available 1, information indicates the use of Solomon software for financial systems since 1996 9. This long-standing reliance on Solomon suggests the presence of potentially legacy components within their enterprise IT landscape. The continued use of this system, coupled with a reported positive relationship with their system integrator, SIG (Systems Integration Group), implies a degree of customization and ongoing dependency on this specific vendor for maintenance and support 9. Such long-term system usage often results in deep integration with other internal applications, making significant changes or upgrades a potentially complex undertaking.

Regarding cloud services, KAMO Power employs a hybrid approach. They utilize Google Cloud as an Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) provider 2. Simultaneously, they offer hosted services, including data storage and application hosting, to their member cooperatives through their own virtualized servers 10. This indicates a strategy that balances the scalability and cost-effectiveness of public cloud solutions with the need for maintaining control and potentially addressing specific requirements like data sovereignty or regulatory compliance through their private or community cloud infrastructure. The integration of a major public cloud platform like Google Cloud highlights a move towards modern, scalable IT solutions, while their in-house hosting capabilities suggest a commitment to providing tailored services to their members.

KAMO Power's network architecture comprises a substantial high-voltage transmission system extending over 2,900 miles across Oklahoma, Missouri, Kansas, and Arkansas 1. This extensive network facilitates interconnections with numerous other electric utilities at voltage levels ranging from 69 kV to 345 kV, supporting more than 295 distribution substations 1. Complementing their electrical infrastructure is a nearly 4,000-mile fiber optic network managed by their subsidiary, K-Powernet 5. This fiber network boasts interconnections that extend nationwide and even globally, enabling K-Powernet to offer advanced telecommunication services 6. Recognizing the increasing demand for bandwidth and reliable communication, KAMO Power has recently undertaken a significant upgrade to their rural broadband network through the deployment of Infinera's XTM Series optical networking solution 14. This upgrade enhances the network's capacity, reliability, and security, supporting both existing and modern Ethernet-based services while providing a pathway for future scalability up to 400G transmission speeds 14.

Information regarding KAMO Power's data center infrastructure indicates the presence of an on-premises operational control center located in their headquarters in Vinita, Oklahoma 17. This control room is equipped with advanced technology, including a 16-display command and control video wall system operated by multiple custom workstations, suggesting a sophisticated environment for monitoring and managing their power transmission network 17. Furthermore, their provision of hosted services to member cooperatives on virtualized servers 10 implies the existence of underlying data center facilities, although the specific details regarding their size, location, and redundancy capabilities are not publicly detailed. A job posting for a Computer Systems Analyst I, with the work location specified as Vinita Headquarters 19, further supports the presence of IT infrastructure, potentially including data center space, at their main facility.

KAMO Power collaborates with a variety of hardware and software vendors to support their operations. Infinera stands out as a key vendor for their recent network modernization efforts, supplying the XTM Series optical networking solution 14. BlueAlly plays a crucial role as Infinera's channel partner, providing additional IP solutions and a range of services encompassing network design, pre-staging, installation, and commissioning for this significant upgrade 14. In their operational technology environment, Open Systems International (OSI) is a significant vendor, having been contracted in 2013 to supply an Energy Management System/Distribution Management System (EMS/DMS) based on their monarch platform 21. This system replaced a legacy Siemens TG control system, marking a key modernization initiative in their OT infrastructure 21. KAMO Power's broader technology stack includes Google Cloud for infrastructure services, along with various web technologies and libraries such as jQuery UI, Lightbox, jQuery Mobile, Bootstrap, and underlying operating systems like Debian, as well as virtualization software from VMware 2. For their control room and conference facilities, Ford Audio-Video Systems provided audio-visual solutions 17. Their financial operations rely on Solomon software provided by SIG 9. Additionally, for services offered to their member cooperatives, KAMO Power hosts applications such as Aclara's meter data management system and Milsoft products on their infrastructure 10. This diverse vendor landscape reflects the complex technological requirements of a modern power transmission and telecommunications provider.

KAMO Power has demonstrated a commitment to modernizing its infrastructure. The 2013 agreement with OSI to implement their EMS/DMS system represented a significant step in upgrading their operational technology, replacing an older Siemens system 21. More recently, the deployment of Infinera's XTM Series on their rural broadband network signifies an ongoing effort to enhance their IT infrastructure 14. This network upgrade is specifically designed to support both legacy services and modern Ethernet-based services, ensuring a smooth transition while enabling the delivery of higher-capacity and more reliable transport services to their members 14. These modernization initiatives across both OT and IT domains highlight KAMO Power's proactive approach to maintaining and improving their operational capabilities.

**Operational Technology (OT) Environment:**

Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) systems are integral to KAMO Power's operational technology environment. The 2013 contract awarded to OSI for an EMS/DMS system included advanced SCADA functionality 21. This implementation was intended to enhance the capabilities of KAMO Power and its member distribution systems for the subsequent decade 21. Furthermore, a job advertisement for a Field Systems Analyst lists SCADA systems as part of the complex telecommunications and computer equipment that the role entails responsibility for troubleshooting, installation, testing, and repair 22. These details underscore the critical role of SCADA in KAMO Power's operations, facilitating the monitoring and control of their extensive power transmission and distribution network. The upgrade to OSI's platform signifies a move towards a more contemporary and integrated system for managing their grid.

Currently, there is no publicly available information in the provided material regarding KAMO Power's utilization of Manufacturing Execution Systems (MES) 1. Given KAMO Power's primary focus on power transmission rather than large-scale manufacturing, the absence of this information is not unexpected. However, the company does employ Building Automation Systems (BAS) to some extent. Specifically, their facilities in Vinita, Oklahoma, utilize Crestron room scheduling and integrated control systems within their 13 conference rooms 17. This indicates a level of automation for managing building functionalities, particularly in their main operational site.

The provided snippets do not contain specific details about KAMO Power's Internet of Things (IoT) deployments 1. Nevertheless, the broader trend within the utility industry points towards an increasing adoption of IoT technologies for various smart grid applications, including advanced metering infrastructure, grid monitoring, and predictive maintenance. While explicit confirmation of KAMO Power's IoT initiatives is absent in this information, it remains a plausible area of technological advancement for the cooperative, aligning with industry best practices aimed at enhancing efficiency and reliability.

Similarly, the research material does not explicitly detail any specific initiatives related to OT/IT convergence 27. However, the modernization efforts undertaken by KAMO Power, such as the upgrade of their SCADA system and the enhancement of their network infrastructure, represent fundamental steps that facilitate greater integration between their operational technology and information technology environments. These upgrades lay the groundwork for improved data analytics, enhanced cybersecurity measures, and increased overall operational efficiency, which are key drivers for OT/IT convergence in the energy sector.

**Digital Transformation Initiatives:**

KAMO Power's recent network upgrade, facilitated by Infinera and BlueAlly, stands as a significant component of their digital transformation strategy 14. This initiative aims to provide high-capacity and reliable services, essential for supporting the evolving digital needs of both KAMO Power and its member cooperatives 14. The cooperative also demonstrates a commitment to innovation through its "Robust Tech Stack Integration," which includes the utilization of Google Cloud, jQuery UI, Bootstrap, and other modern technologies 2. This integration suggests an ongoing effort to leverage contemporary tools and platforms to enhance their services and operational capabilities. Further underscoring their focus on technological advancement, the job description for an Assistant Chief Technology Officer (ACTO) highlights responsibilities encompassing strategic planning, IT infrastructure, cybersecurity, commercial telecommunications, and the adoption of emerging technologies 30. The creation of such a leadership role with a focus on technology strategy and innovation clearly indicates the importance KAMO Power places on digital transformation for its future.

**Infrastructure Challenges and Technical Debt:**

An identified infrastructure challenge for KAMO Power, specifically through its subsidiary K-Powernet, is the insufficient capacity of their existing communications infrastructure to adequately serve the growing demands of rural Oklahomans 4. To address this limitation, K-Powernet has sought ARPA funding to significantly expand its broadband infrastructure throughout and beyond the Green Country region of Oklahoma 4. This proactive approach to securing funding highlights their commitment to overcoming this capacity constraint and improving service delivery to their constituents. Additionally, Ozark Electric, one of KAMO Power's member cooperatives, reported being notified of rate increases attributed to the rising energy demand and the increased costs associated with new generation and transmission projects 31. This suggests a potential broader challenge within the KAMO Power ecosystem related to meeting escalating energy needs and the financial implications of necessary infrastructure investments. KAMO Power's CEO, Ted Hilmes, has acknowledged that their electric systems are in a state of continuous improvement and face ongoing challenges in maintaining reliability and capacity 32. This statement reflects an awareness of the dynamic nature of the energy industry and the constant need for upgrades and enhancements. The deployment of the SMART system for substation and distribution asset management by KAMO Power 33 further indicates a recognition of the need for sophisticated tools to manage the scale and complexity of their infrastructure assets. This deployment suggests a proactive step towards improving efficiency and potentially addressing challenges associated with maintaining a large and geographically dispersed infrastructure. Currently, there is no publicly available information in the provided snippets that directly indicates the presence of significant technical debt within KAMO Power's systems.

**Security Posture and History:**

Based on the information available, there are no publicly disclosed security incidents or data breaches directly involving KAMO Power 1. However, the broader context of the utility sector, as illustrated by the mention of a ransomware attack on a small Colorado utility 35, underscores the inherent cybersecurity risks that electric cooperatives face. This industry-wide awareness likely positions security as a significant concern for KAMO Power, prompting proactive measures to mitigate potential threats.

While no direct regulatory findings against KAMO Power are present in the snippets, Associated Electric Cooperative, Inc. (AECI), of which KAMO Power is a member-owner, received NERC Notices of Penalty in 2020 for several violations of reliability standards 41. These violations pertained to areas such as backup functionality for regional dispatch centers, consistency of facility ratings, adherence to transmission reliability policies during switching procedures, and the adequate staffing of real-time operating positions with certified system operators 41. SERC (Southeastern Electric Reliability Council) determined that some of these violations posed serious and substantial risks to the reliability of the bulk power system 41. Given KAMO Power's reliance on AECI for its power supply and its role as a member of this cooperative, these regulatory findings against AECI are pertinent. They suggest potential vulnerabilities within the larger operational ecosystem that KAMO Power is a part of, highlighting the importance of robust reliability and security practices at the regional level.

Legal cases involving KAMO Electric Cooperative primarily relate to land easements and condemnation proceedings, and do not appear to be directly connected to security matters 42. However, a lawsuit mentioned in the snippets involved landowners claiming that KAMO Electric Cooperative and its subsidiary, K-PowerNet, LLC, exceeded the scope of easements granted for electric-transmission lines by using the installed fiber-optic cables for commercial telecommunications purposes 44. This legal action, which was ultimately settled with KAMO Power, highlights the complexities arising from the dual use of their infrastructure for both power transmission and commercial telecommunications. While not a security incident, it underscores the legal and regulatory landscape within which KAMO Power operates.

**Current Security Program Elements:**

KAMO Power is obligated to adhere to reliability standards set forth by the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC), as well as those of AECI and any applicable Regional Entity 40. This commitment to NERC standards is particularly significant as it implies compliance with NERC's Critical Infrastructure Protection (CIP) standards, which are specifically designed to ensure the security of the bulk power system 40. This adherence to industry-specific regulations forms a foundational element of KAMO Power's security program, indicating the presence of security policies and frameworks that align with these mandatory requirements. Furthermore, the mention of AECI's Ripley Energy Center complying with all emissions requirements established by regulatory agencies 45 suggests a broader organizational culture of regulatory compliance within the ecosystem that KAMO Power is a part of. This emphasis on compliance, particularly with NERC CIP standards for cybersecurity and operational reliability, is a crucial aspect of KAMO Power's efforts to protect its critical infrastructure.

Personnel at KAMO Power hold responsibilities that contribute to the organization's security posture. The role of Computer Systems Analyst includes providing technical support and troubleshooting for network and IT issues 19, which would likely encompass some aspects of security maintenance and incident response. The Assistant Chief Technology Officer (ACTO) position has explicit responsibilities in the realm of cybersecurity 30, indicating a leadership role in overseeing the organization's security strategy and implementation. Additionally, the mention of a former safety director suggests a focus on physical and operational safety, which often intersects with security protocols, particularly in the context of critical infrastructure protection 46. While the exact structure and size of a dedicated cybersecurity team are not detailed in the provided information, these roles indicate that security functions are integrated into the organizational responsibilities at various levels.

**Security Vendor Ecosystem and Technology Partners:**

The publicly available information does not explicitly name any specific security vendors utilized by KAMO Power. However, several key technology partners have been identified. Infinera is a crucial partner for their network infrastructure upgrades 14. BlueAlly serves as Infinera's channel partner, providing essential IP solutions and services for this network modernization project 14. For their operational technology, Open Systems International (OSI) is a key technology partner, supplying the EMS/DMS system with SCADA functionality 21. Google Cloud provides infrastructure as a service 2, and SIG supports their financial systems through the Solomon software 9. No Managed Security Service Providers (MSSPs) are explicitly mentioned in the provided material. BlueAlly and SIG can both be considered system integrators for their respective deployments.

The relationship with SIG for their financial systems has been long-standing and positive, dating back to 1996 9. The recent network upgrade indicates a significant engagement with Infinera and BlueAlly, commencing at least in 2023 14. This suggests a preference for establishing relationships with reliable and experienced technology providers. Information regarding satisfaction levels beyond the positive mention of SIG, detailed case studies, or specific contract details is not publicly available within these snippets.

The following table summarizes KAMO Power's identified technology partners and their roles:

| **Partner** | **Role** | **Relationship Duration (if known)** | **Snippets** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Infinera | Optical Networking Solution Provider | Since at least 2023 | 14 |
| BlueAlly | Channel Partner, IP Solutions & Services, System Integrator | Since at least 2023 | 14 |
| Open Systems International (OSI) | EMS/DMS System Provider | Since 2013 | 21 |
| Google Cloud | Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) Provider | Unknown | 2 |
| SIG (Systems Integration Group) | Financial System Provider (Solomon) & Integrator | Since 1996 | 9 |
| Ford Audio-Video Systems | Audio-Visual Solutions Provider | Unknown | 17 |
| Aclara | Meter Data Management System Provider | Unknown (Application hosted by KAMO for members) | 10 |
| Milsoft | Utility Software Provider | Unknown (Application hosted by KAMO for members) | 10 |

**Acknowledged Technical and Security Issues:**

KAMO Power, through its subsidiary K-Powernet, has publicly acknowledged the need to expand its existing communications infrastructure to meet the increasing broadband demands of rural Oklahoma 4. This highlights a capacity limitation in their current network. Additionally, the CEO, Ted Hilmes, has stated that their electric systems are continuously being improved, acknowledging the ongoing challenges in maintaining system capacity and reliability 32. This suggests a proactive approach to addressing potential performance issues. The regulatory findings against AECI, a key partner and power supplier for KAMO Power, regarding compliance with NERC reliability standards 41, could also be considered an acknowledged area requiring attention within their broader operational ecosystem. While these findings were against AECI, they indirectly reflect potential challenges related to maintaining the reliability and security of the interconnected power grid that KAMO Power is a part of.

**Conclusion:**

KAMO Power demonstrates a proactive approach to managing its technical infrastructure and security posture within the complex and regulated energy sector. The cooperative is actively engaged in modernizing its network and operational technology, as evidenced by the recent network upgrade and the earlier implementation of a new EMS/DMS system. Their hybrid cloud strategy indicates a balanced approach to leveraging both public and private cloud resources. While specific security incidents are not publicly disclosed, their adherence to NERC reliability standards, including CIP, suggests a commitment to maintaining a robust security program. The long-standing relationships with key technology partners like SIG, and the more recent significant engagements with Infinera and BlueAlly, highlight a strategic approach to vendor selection. Acknowledged challenges include the need to expand broadband capacity and the continuous efforts required to maintain the reliability of their power transmission infrastructure. The regulatory findings against AECI serve as a reminder of the importance of vigilance and compliance within the interconnected energy grid.

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