



“Breece Hill Drives Box Uphill”

Former tape-only maven Breece Hill LLC has updated its all-in-one disk backup and tape archiving appliance, adding among other features LTO 3 tape and 400GB ATA disk drives, and an option for dual Xeon processors.

Breece Hill became the first supplier of DLT tape libraries in 1993, and has since sold around 30,000 libraries and autoloaders, spanning the low end to high end. Now the company is attempting to escape the continuing consolidation in the tape market, by converting its sizeable midrange customer base to its disk-based appliance product, called the iStoRA.

How well is that going? This week Breece Hill said that it expects iStoRA revenue to exceed standalone tape autoloader revenue within the next 12 months. "We saw SMB customers educating themselves in early 2004. Each month we've seen sales growth as acceptance has been growing for D2D2T [disk-to-disk-to-tape] backup in the SMB market," the company said.

The iStoRA appliance combines disk and tape with backup and optional archiving software in a 4U enclosure, and starts at a list price of \$18,000. The backup software is Breece Hill's, although the device will work with Veritas, Commvault and BakBone backup software. The archiving software comes from XenData.

Fittingly for a company with strong roots and continuing interest in tape, Breece Hill's product announcement quoted integrator USI, which highlighted the fact that rising data volumes and accelerating tape performance have meant in contrast with some reports, tape is far from dead.

"We're using the iStoRA for most of our small to mid-sized customers. The industry doesn't usually highlight the importance of tape for the SMB but we're using it more and more as integrated with the Breece Hill product," USI said.

