Lenovo

Introduction to Windows Server 2016 Hyper-V Discrete Device Assignment

Introduces the new PCIe Device Passthrough feature of Microsoft Windows Server 2016

Describes how to make PCIe devices available to guest operating systems in Hyper-V

Demonstrates how to make an NVIDIA GPU available in a virtual machine

Helps IT Specialists understand the new features of Windows Server 2016

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Abstract

This paper describes the steps on how to enable Discrete Device Assignment (also known as PCI Passthrough) available as part of the Hyper-V role in Microsoft Windows Server 2016.

Discrete Device Assignment is a performance enhancement that allows a specific physical PCI device to be directly controlled by a guest VM running on the Hyper-V instance. Specifically, this new feature aims to deliver a certain type of PCI device class, such as Graphics Processing Units (GPU) or Non-Volatile Memory express (NVMe) devices, to a Windows Server 2016 virtual machine, where the VM will be given full and direct access to the physical PCIe device.

In this paper we describe how to enable and use this feature on Lenovo servers using Windows Server 2016 Technical Preview 4 (TP4). We provide the step-by-step instructions on how to make an NVIDIA GPU available to a Hyper-V virtual machine.

This paper is aimed at IT specialists and IT managers wanting to understand more about the new features of Windows Server 2016.

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Contents

Introduction

Discrete Device Assignment (DDA, also known as PCI Passthrough) is a performance enhancement in Microsoft Windows Server 2016 and Hyper-V. It allows a specific physical PCIe device installed on the host system to be directly and exclusively controlled by a guest virtual machine (VM).

In this paper we describe the steps of how to configure an NVIDIA Quadro 5000 GPU, which is installed in one of the PCIe slots in our server, and make it accessible and managable by a Hyper-V guest VM that is running.

In our lab tests we used Windows Server 2016 Technical Preview 4 (TP4, build 10586) on the following servers:

- Lenovo ThinkServer RD650
- Lenovo System x3560 M5

VT-d support is required: The main prerequsite for supporting Discrete Device Assignment is that Intel Virtualization Technology for Direct I/O (VT-d) be enabled in UEFI.

At the time of this writing, the two main types of devices that will be supported with Discrete Device Assignment are the following:

- GPUs and coprocessors
- NVMe (Non-Volatile Memory express) SSD controllers

In this paper, we provide the instructions on how to enable a Windows Server 2016 guest VM to utilize the Discrete Device Assignment functionality using a NVIDIA Quadro 5000 GPU running on the VM host. We also describe how to reverse the process and return the device to the host system.

Installing the GPU and creating a VM

The steps to get the GPU installed and the virtual machine operational are as follows:

1. Verify in UEFI that VT-d is enabled in the UEFI setup of the server. In some servers it is enabled by default.
2. Power off the server and install the NVIDIA Quadro 5000 GPU into a supported slot. Note that we are using the GPU for computational workloads, *not* as the video console for the server.
3. Install Windows Server 2016 (full product including the GUI). We installed Technical Preview 4 in our tests.
4. Login as an administrator and launch Device Manager. Click Display Adapters. Two display adapters will be listed, one of them being the NVIDIA Quadro 5000 GPU. Because the device driver for the GPU isn't native to Windows Server 2016, the GPU device will appear as a yellow bang with a Code 28 device status, as shown in Figure 1 on page 4.

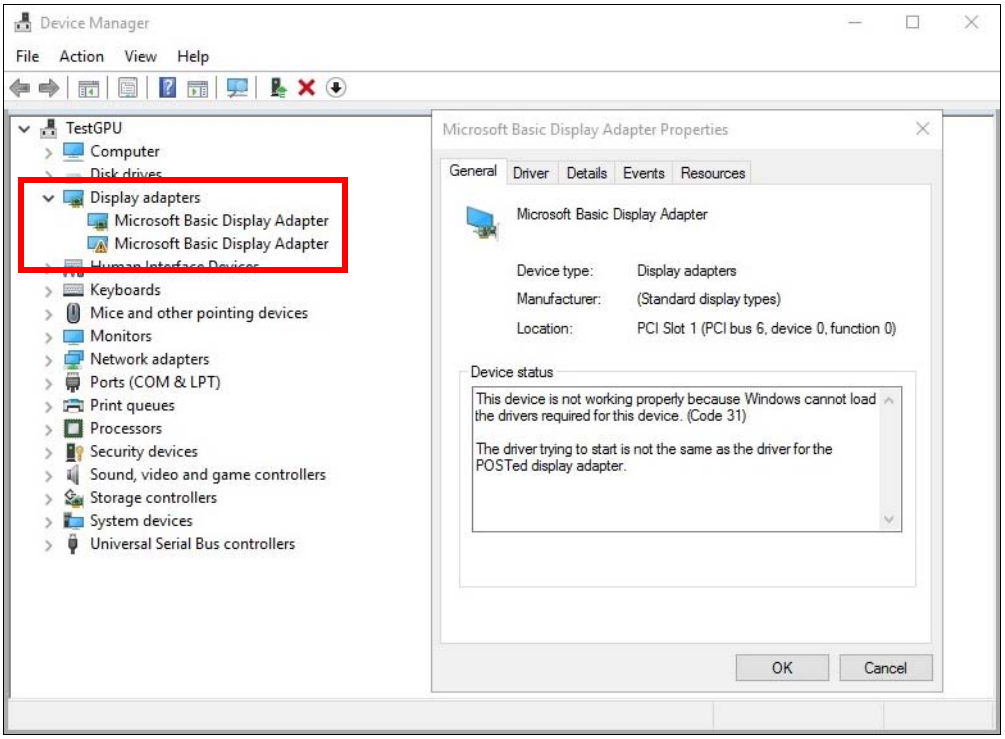

Figure 1 Device Manager before the GPU device driver is installed on the host system

5. Install the appropriate device driver.

   At the time of this writing, the Windows device driver for this specific graphics card wasn't included with Windows Server 2016 TP4. NVIDIA provided us with a signed Windows 10 driver package that we were able to install under Windows Server 2016.

6. The device now appears in Windows Device Manager as shown in Figure 2.

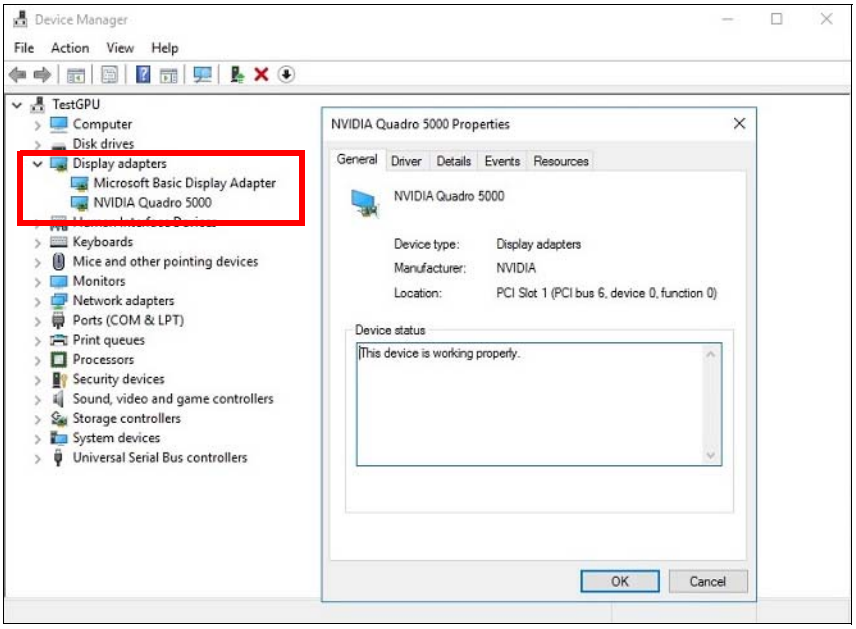

Figure 2 Device Manager after the GPU device driver is installed on the host system

7. Install the Hyper-V role. Reboot the server when prompted.
8. Create a Hyper-V virtual machine (generation 2) and install Windows Server 2016 TP4 as the guest operating system.
9. Start the virtual machine, log in, and open Device Manager in the VM. Under Display Adapters, there will be a single display adapter, as shown in Figure 3.

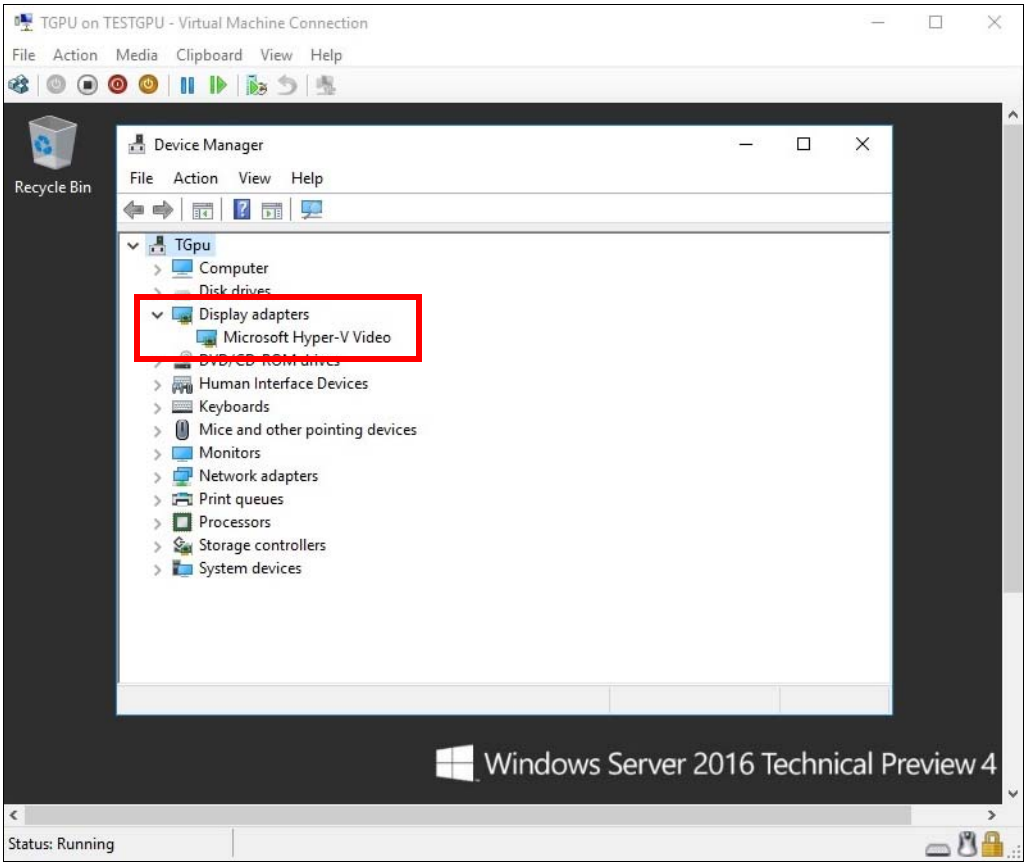

Figure 3 Device Manager inside the VM showing the display adapters

Enabling the device inside the VM

Now that the VM is operational, the next steps are to enable the GPU to be made available to the VM. Before the physical device is allowed to be passed through to the VM, the device must be disabled on the host system. The physical device must be accessible/available exclusively to the VM only.

The steps to enable Discrete Device Assignment to make the GPU available exclusively to the virtual machine are as follows:

1. On the host system, open Windows PowerShell as an administrator on the host system.

2. Use the **Get-PnpDevice** command with a search condition to narrow down the PnpDdevice class you want to search for (in our example, to narrow down to just the “Display” class). The PowerShell commands are listed in Example 1.

Example 1 Get-PnpDevice command

```
$pnpdevs = Get-PnpDevice | Where-Object {$_.Present -eq $true} | Where-Object
{$_.Class -eq "Display"}

$pnpdevs
```

The result is shown in Figure 4.

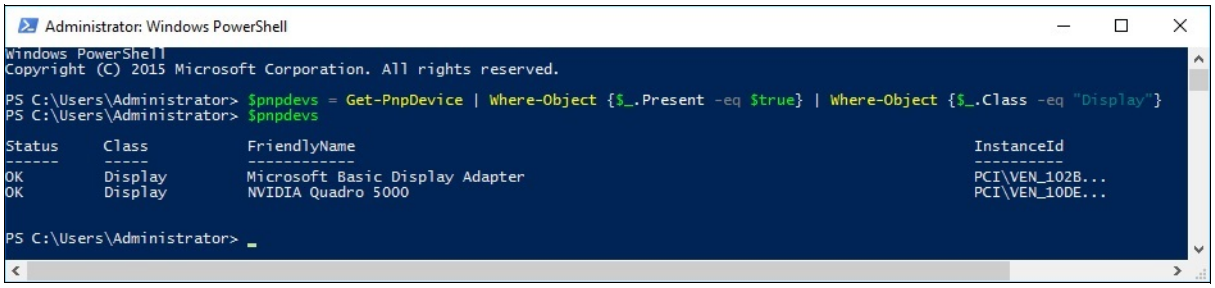

Figure 4 Get-PnpDevice command to display active Display devices

Tip: Use class `SCSIAdapter` to find NVMe storage adapter devices.

3. Disable the GPU graphics device on the host system, using the **Disable-PnpDevice** command in the PowerShell command window shown in Example 2. It is assumed you have already run the commands in Example 1 in the same PowerShell window.

Example 2 Disable-PnpDevice command

```
Disable-PnpDevice -InstanceId $pnpdevs[1].InstanceId -Confirm:$false

$pnpdevs = Get-PnpDevice | Where-Object {$_.Present -eq $true} | Where-Object
{$_.Class -eq "Display"}

$pnpdevs
```

In the example, the array index into the `$pnpdevs` variable will be 1, because the NVIDIA GPU device is the second entry in the list (the array is zero-based, where the first index is position 0).

The output of the commands is shown in Figure 5 on page 7.

We ran Get-PnpDevice a second time to verify the status change. You can see that the GPU now displays a status of `Error`. This status is expected.

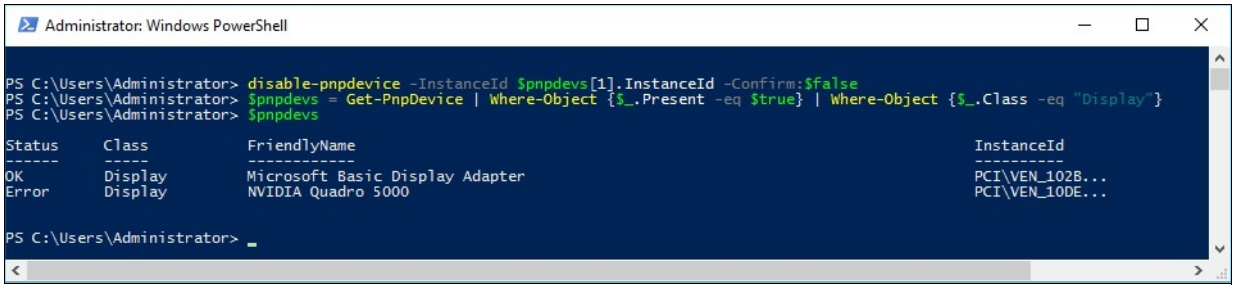

Figure 5 Disable-PnpDevice command

4. Check Device Manager from the host system again to confirm that the NVIDIA GPU is disabled on the host system. See Figure 6.

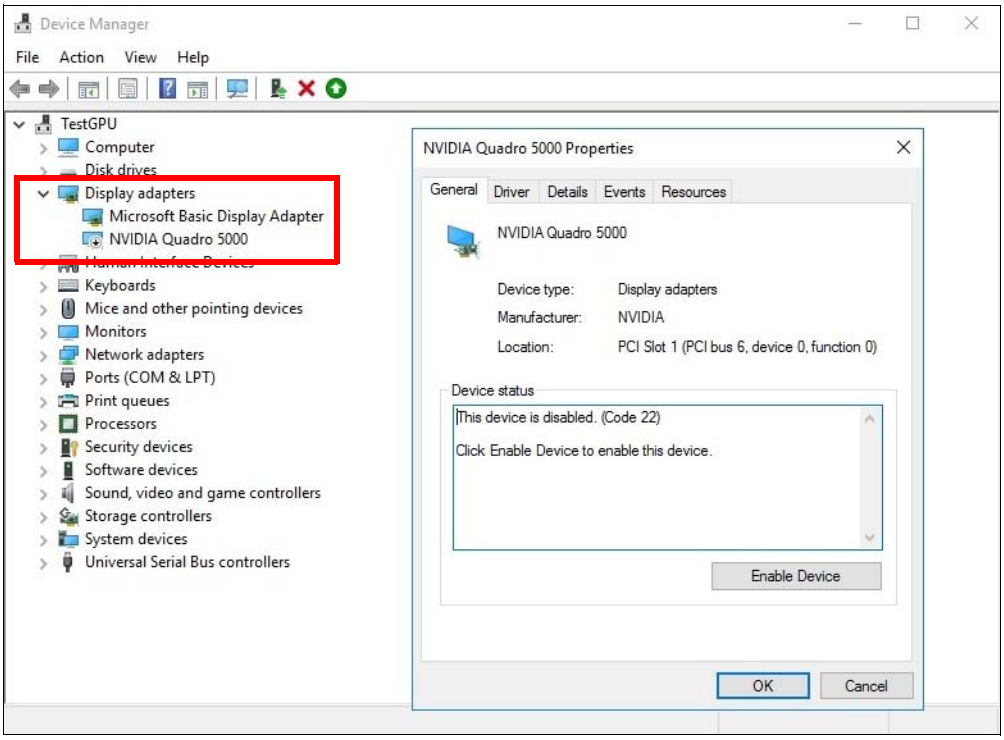

Figure 6 Device Manager on the host system indicating that the GPU is now disabled

5. Dismount the device from the host system by first obtaining the PCI location of the physical device. The **Get-PnpDeviceProperty** command retrieves the PCI location path of the pass-through device. The **Dismount-VmHostAssignableDevice** command will then dismount the physical device so that it's no longer accessible on the Parent Partition.

   We ran `Get-PnpDevice` again to verify that the change was successful. The commands are shown in Example 3.

Example 3 Get-PnpDeviceProperty and Dismount-VmHostAssignableDevice

```
$locationpath = ($pnpdevs[1] | Get-PnpDeviceProperty
DEVPKEY_Device_LocationPaths).data[0]

$locationpath

Dismount-VmHostAssignableDevice -locationpath $locationpath -force
```

```
$pnpdevs = Get-PnpDevice | Where-Object {$_.Present -eq $true} | Where-Object
{$_.Class -eq "Display"}

$pnpdevs
```

The output of the commands is shown in Figure 7.

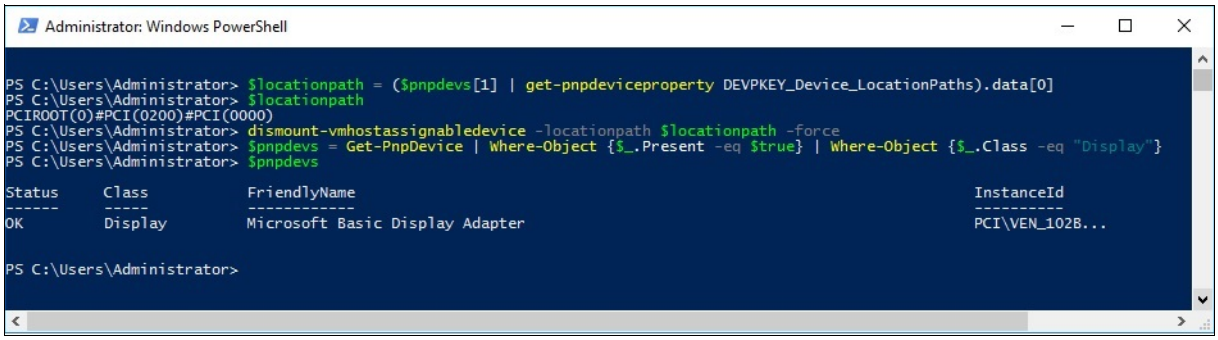

Figure 7 Output of Get-PnpDeviceProperty and Dismount-VmHostAssignableDevice

6. After the dismount command is executed the NVIDIA GPU graphics device is no longer listed under the Display device class type. Open Device Manager on the host system again. The GPU is no longer listed under Display adapters (see Figure 8) but instead is listed under System devices as PCI Express Graphics Processing Unit - Dismounted (see Figure 9 on page 9)

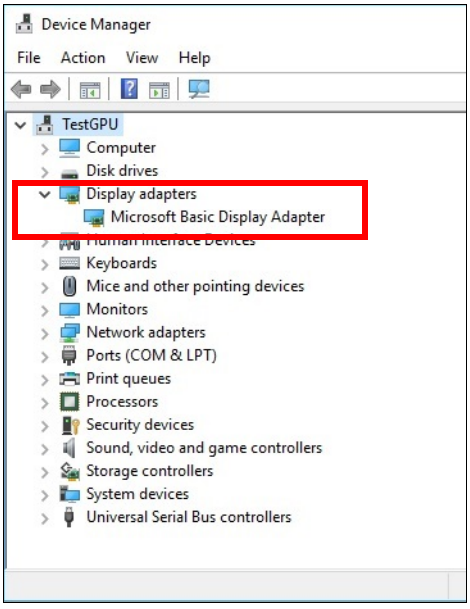

Figure 8 The GPU is no longer listed under Display adapters

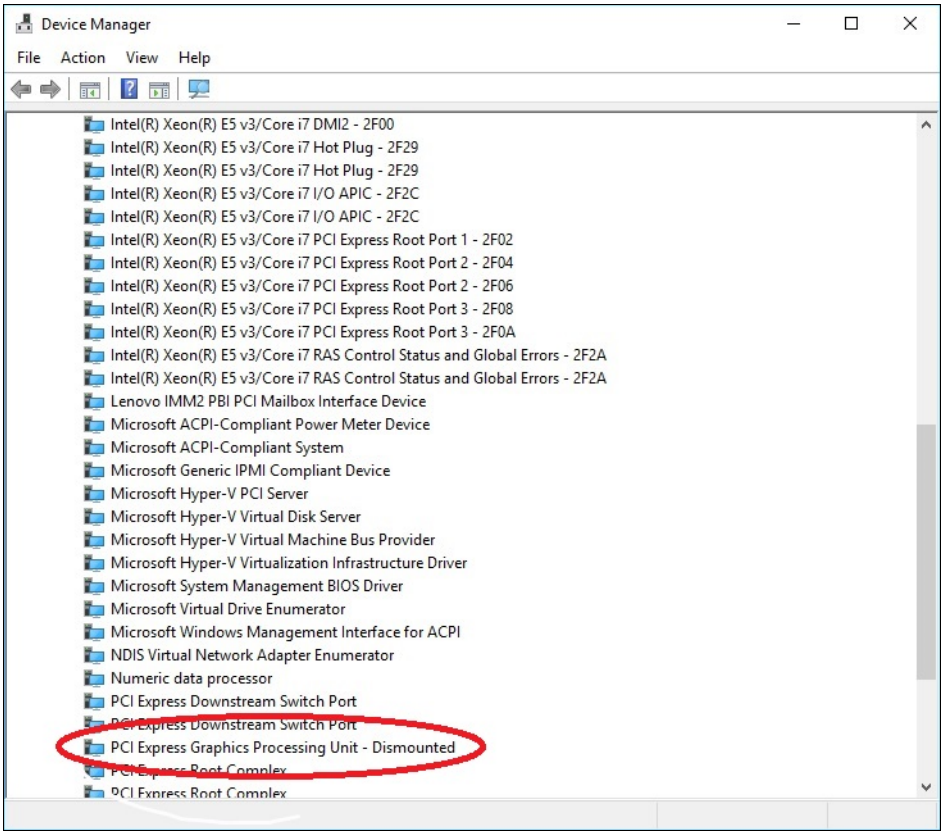

*Figure 9 The GPU now appears as **dismounted** under System devices in Device Manager*

Tip: Remember, even though the device is dismounted on the host, the device is still enabled and therefore the device's I/O resources will remain allocated to the physical device on the host system.

7. Change the automatic stop action of the host to turn off the VM.

   By default, when the host server is shut down, the state of running virtual machines is saved. However, this setting prevents Discrete Device Assignment from being enabled. If you attempt to enable DDA, you will get the error shown in Figure 10.

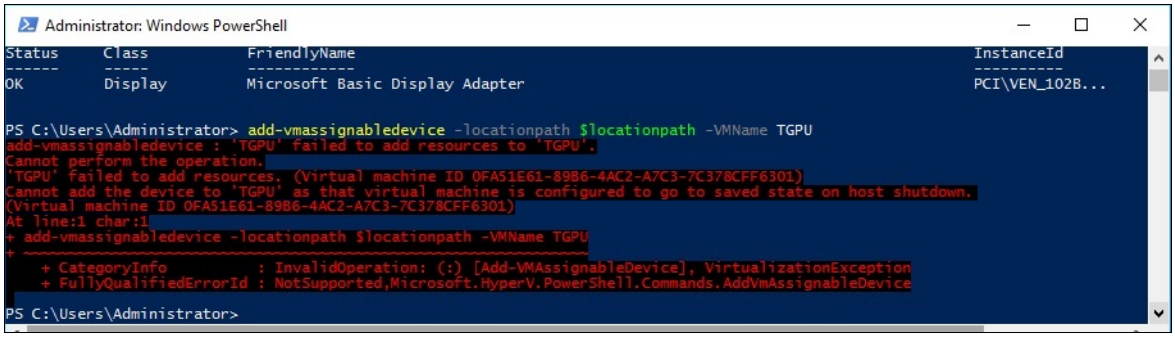

Figure 10 Error attempting to run Add-VMAssignableDevice

In the properties for the VM, go to Automatic Stop Action and change the setting to **Turn off virtual machine** as shown in Figure 11 on page 10.

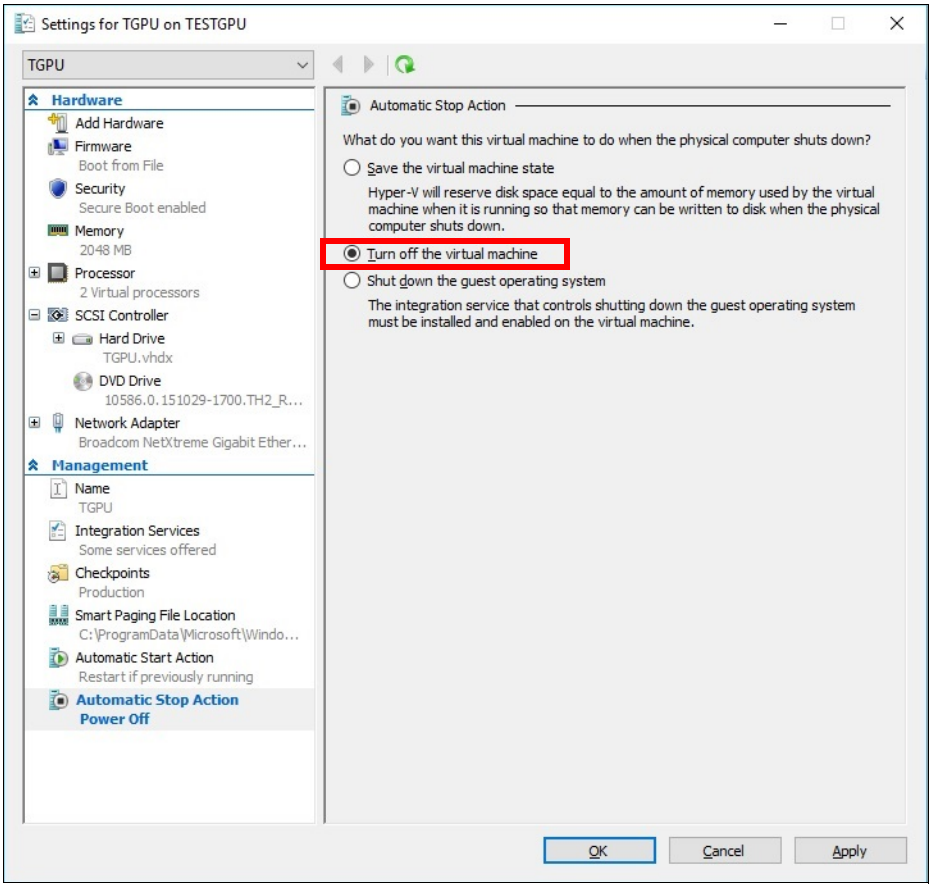

Figure 11 Setting the Automatic Stop Action for the VM

8. Issue the **Add-VMAssignableDevice** command on the host system to enable Discrete Device Assignment as shown in Example 4, below.

   The variable `$locationpath` comes from the commands we ran in Example 3 on page 7. `TGPU` is the name of the virtual machine in our lab environment.

Example 4 Add-VMAssignableDevice

```
Add-VMAssignableDevice -locationpath $locationpath -VMname TGPU
```

   The output of the command, when successful, is shown in Figure 12.

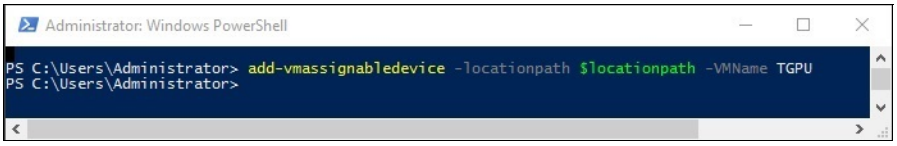

Figure 12 Add-VMAssignableDevice

9. The GPU is now available and accessible exclusively to the VM. Open Device Manager in the VM. The new device is listed under Display adapters, as shown in Figure 13 on page 11.

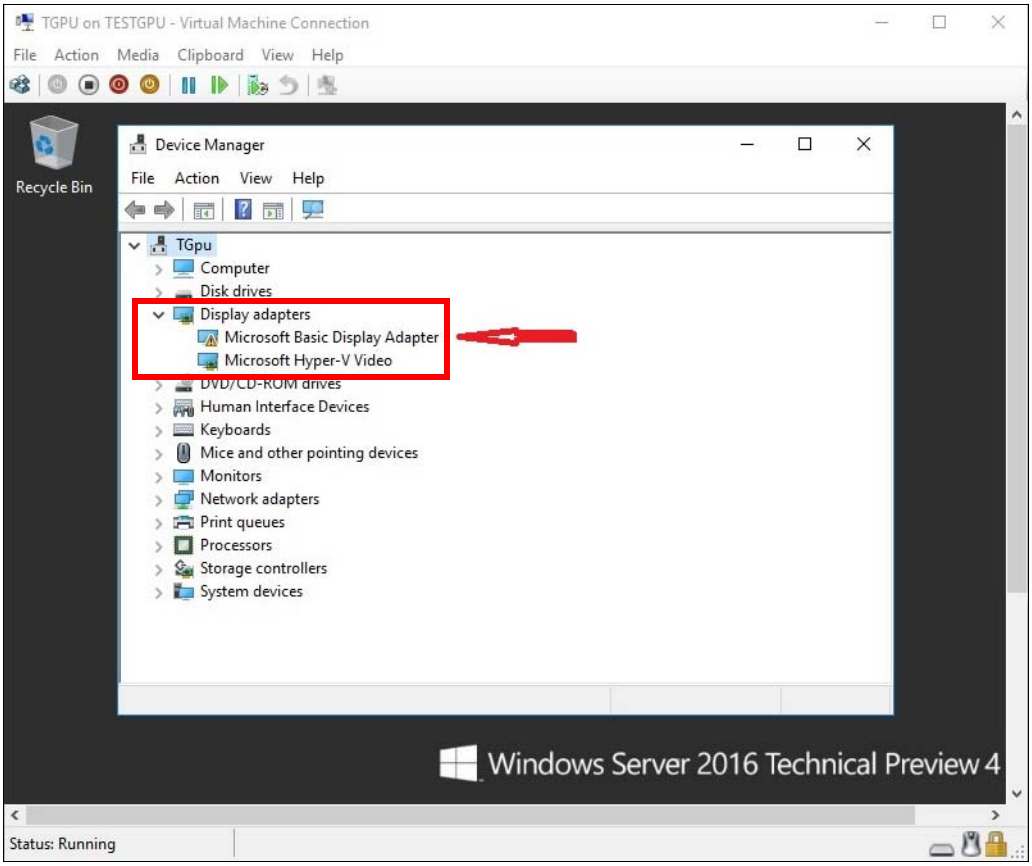

Figure 13 Device Manager in the VM showing the GPU is now accessible

10. Install the device driver for the GPU using the same driver we used in step 5 on page 4. The GPU will then be properly recognized by Device Manager in the VM, as shown in Figure 14 on page 12.

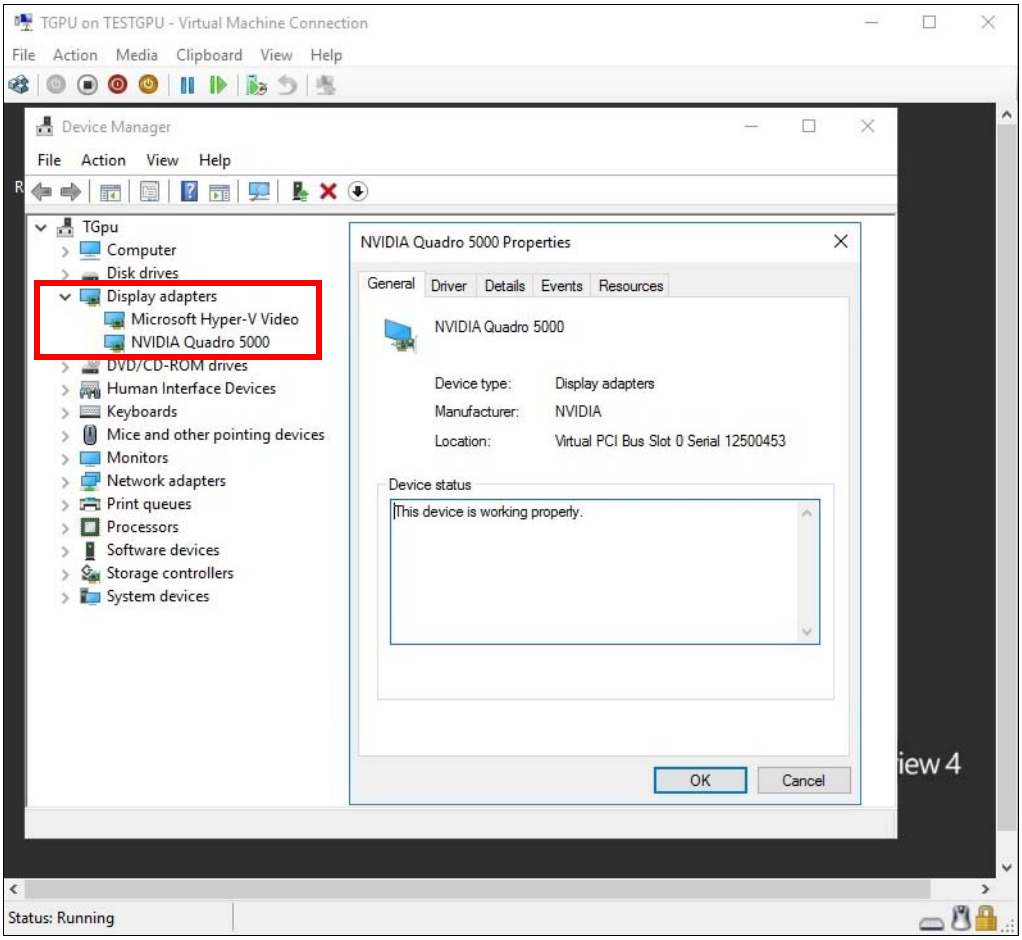

Figure 14 The GPU properly recognized in Device Manager in the VM

Restoring the device to the host system

If the GPU is no longer needed by the virtual machine, you can restore the functionality of the device to the host system. The following steps describe the process.

1. Shut down the VM guest OS that s currently using the NVIDIA GPU graphics adapter.
2. Open PowerShell as Administrator on the host system.
3. Find the device's location path InstanceId from the host system using the **Get-PnpDevice** command. The device is dismounted on the host system and is categorized as System class (as we confirmed in Figure 9 on page 9), so the Get-PnpDevice command will filter on class System, as shown in Example 5.

Example 5 Get-PnpDevice command to find all System class devices

```
$ppsrch = Get-PnpDevice | Where-Object {$_.Present -eq $true} | Where-Object
{$_.Class -eq "System"}

$ppsrch
```

The output of the command is shown in Figure 15 on page 13. The GPU is highlighted in red.

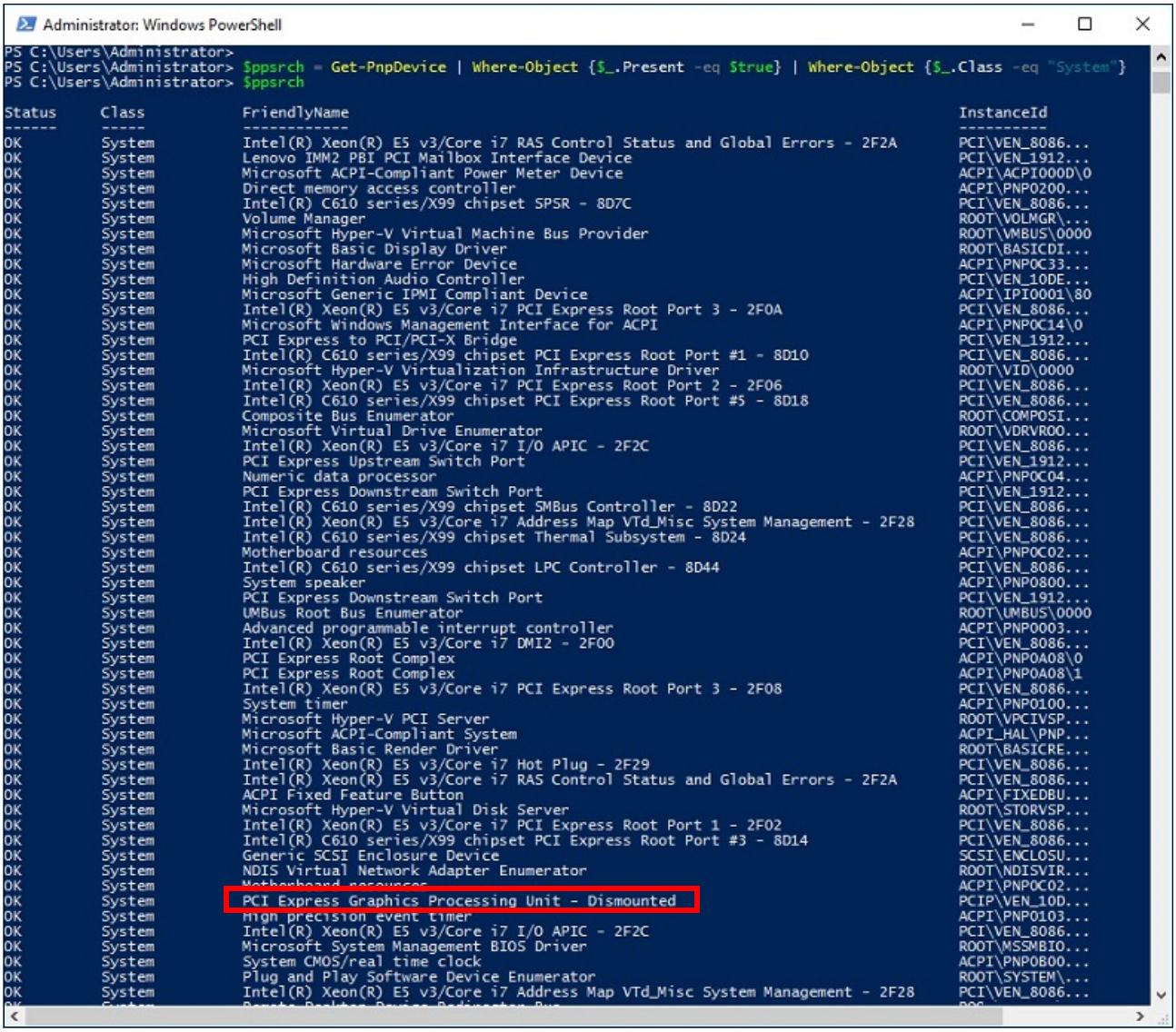

Figure 15 Showing all devices of class System on the host system

Figure 15 shows the variable `$ppsrch` is an array containing various “location paths” InstanceId names. The index is zero-based (that is, the first item is counted as 0) and therefore the index for the dismounted GPU device is 50.

Note: You will have to manually determine the index for the device in the System class by counting the number of entries on the screen. Remember that the first entry is index 0.

4. Use the **Get-PnpDeviceProperty** command to obtain the path location for the device as shown in Example 6.

Example 6 Get-PnpDeviceProperty command

```
$locationpath = ($ppsrch[50] | Get-PnpDeviceProperty
DEVPKEY_Device_LocationPaths).data[0]

$locationpath
```

The output of the command is shown in Figure 16.

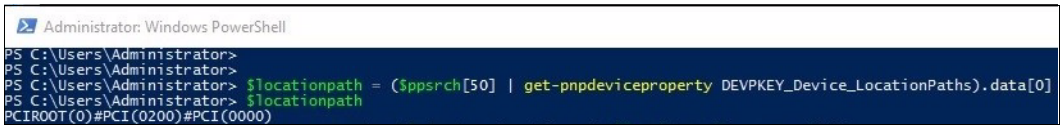

Figure 16 Get-PnpDeviceProperty output

5. Use the **Remove-VMAssignableDevice** command to remove the GPU based on its path location that we just assigned to variable $locationpath, using the following command.

Example 7 Remove-VMAssignableDevice command

```
Remove-VMAssignableDevice -location $locationpath -vmname TGPU
```

The output of the command is shown in Figure 17

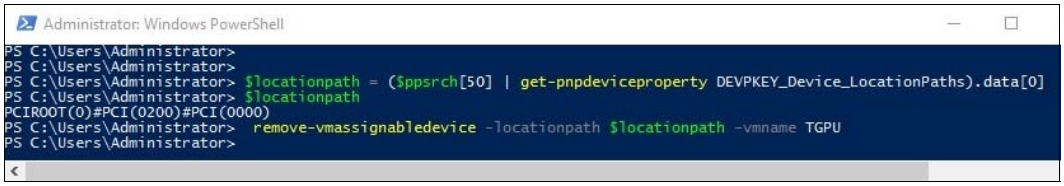

Figure 17 Remove-VMAssignableDevice output

6. You can now confirm that the GPU has been removed from the VM by checking Device Manager in the VM, Figure 18

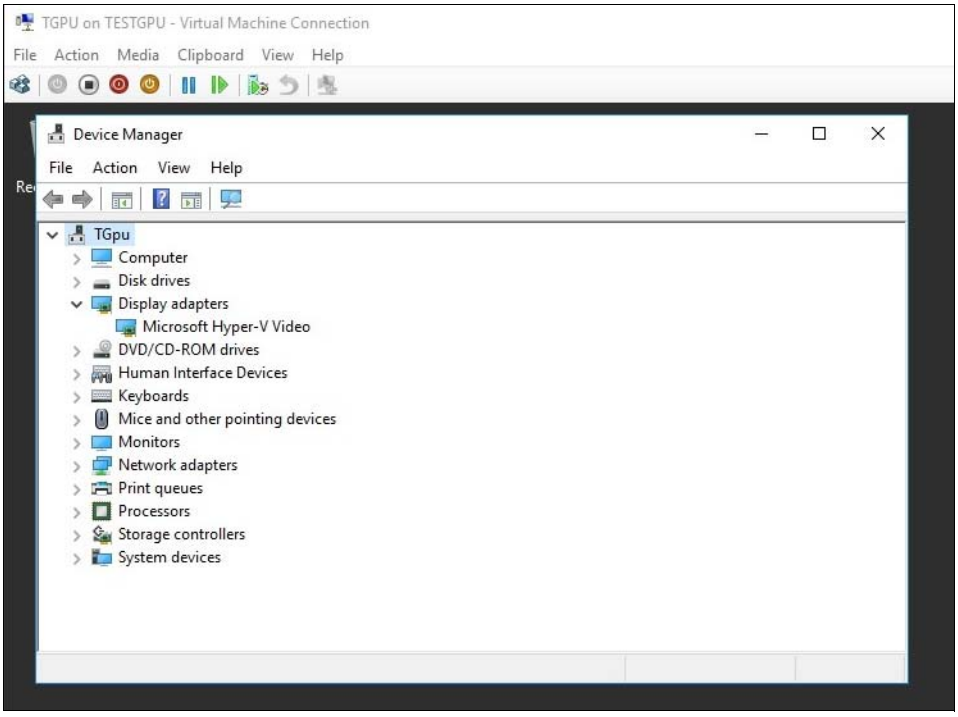

Figure 18 The GPU is now removed as a device from Device Manager in the VM

7. On the host, mount the device again, using the **Mount-VmHostAssignableDevice** command as shown in Example 8

Example 8 Mount-VmHostAssignableDevice command

```
Mount-VmHostAssignableDevice -locationpath $locationpath

$pnpdevs = Get-PnpDevice | Where-Object {$_.Present -eq $true} | Where-Object
{$_.Class -eq "Display"}

$pnpdevs
```

The output is shown in Figure 19.

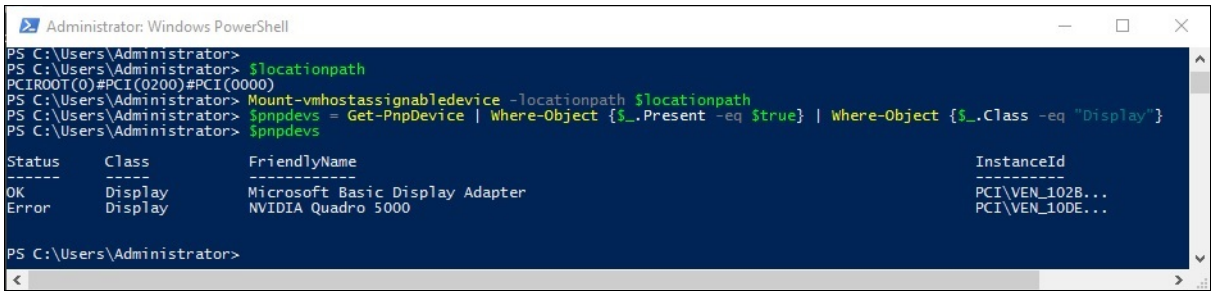

Figure 19 Output of the Mount-VmHostAssignableDevice command

8. The mount can be verified by checking Device Manager on the host (Figure 20). Once again, the device is visible in the Display adapters section (albeit disabled at present).

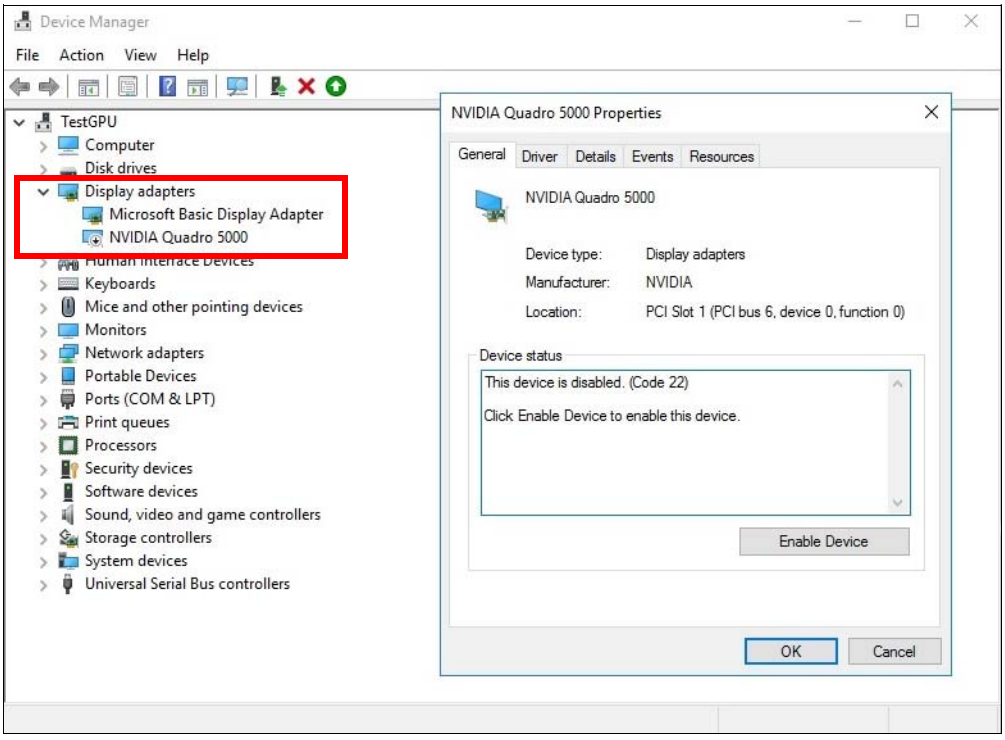

Figure 20 Device Manager shows the GPU is mounted as a device on the host

9. Enable the device using the **Enable-PnpDevice** command. Similar to the Disable-PnpDevice command, the array index into the $pnpdevs variable will be 1,

because the NVIDIA GPU device is the second entry in the list (a zero-based list). The command is as follows:

Example 9 Enable-PnpDevice command

```
$pnpdevs = Get-PnpDevice | Where-Object {$_.Present -eq $true} | Where-Object
{$_.Class -eq "Display"}

$pnpdevs

Enable-PnpDevice -InstanceID $pnpdevs[1].InstanceID -Confirm:$false
```

The output is shown in Figure 21.

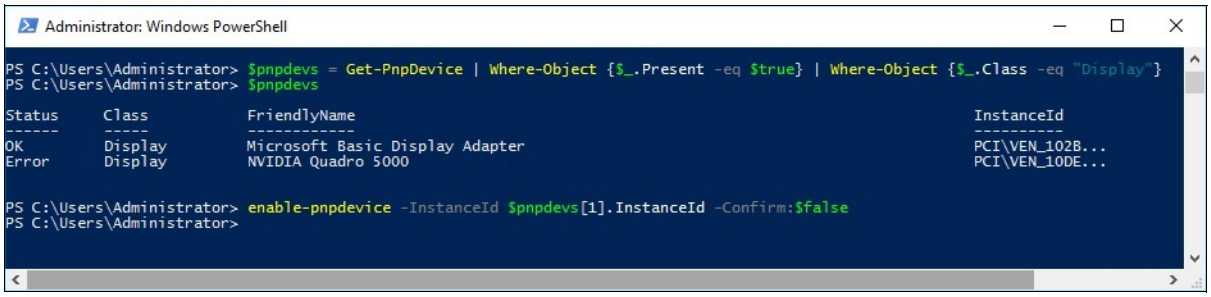

Figure 21 Output of the Enable-PnpDevice command

10. The device is now restored as mounted and enabled on the host system, as shown by the entry in Device Manager, in Figure 22. The device driver is automatically loaded.

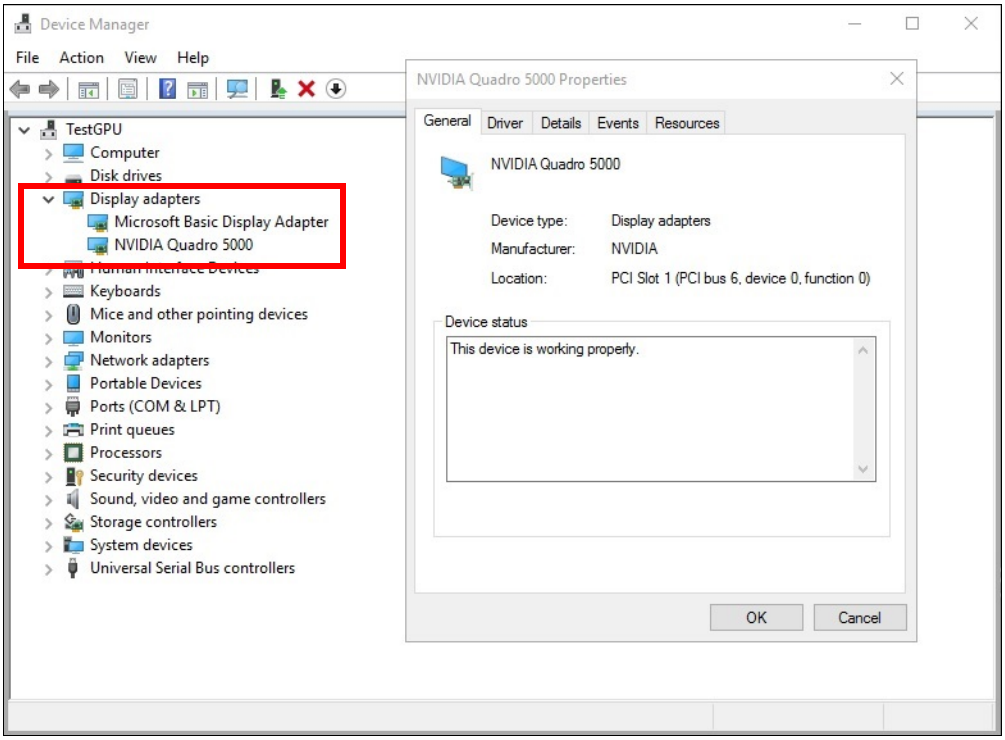

Figure 22 GPU is mounted and activated and the device driver loaded

Summary

Discrete Device Assignment is one of the new features in Windows Server 2016. It makes it possible to make NVMe and GPU devices available for exclusive use by a virtual machine. VMs can own and use the physical device directly and users can get better performance: faster speed in NVMe file operations and more resources for computing and graphics processing with GPUs.

For more information about Discrete Device Assignment, see the following articles:

- Discrete Device Assignment — Description and background

  https://blogs.technet.microsoft.com/virtualization/2015/11/19/discrete-device-assignment-description-and-background/

- Discrete Device Assignment — Machines and devices

  https://blogs.technet.microsoft.com/virtualization/2015/11/20/discrete-device-assignment-machines-and-devices/

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