



THE APPALACHIAN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE CASE STUDY

ABOUT:

The Appalachian Electric Cooperative provides power to residents in Grainger, Hamblen and Jefferson counties in eastern Tennessee. Founded in 1940 with help from the now-defunct Rural Electrification Administration and the Tennessee Valley Authority, the organization currently serves more than 45,000 members.

CHALLENGES:

Before partnering with dataVoice, AEC operated with outage management protocols that matched the era of its founding.

“We were still very much working our outages using our customer information system and printing out trouble tickets on pieces of paper,” Jim Greer, director of operations, explained. “It was a manual process.”

This made life hard for dispatchers who dedicated considerable time to managing physical receipts, which hurt productivity and made responding to outages more difficult.

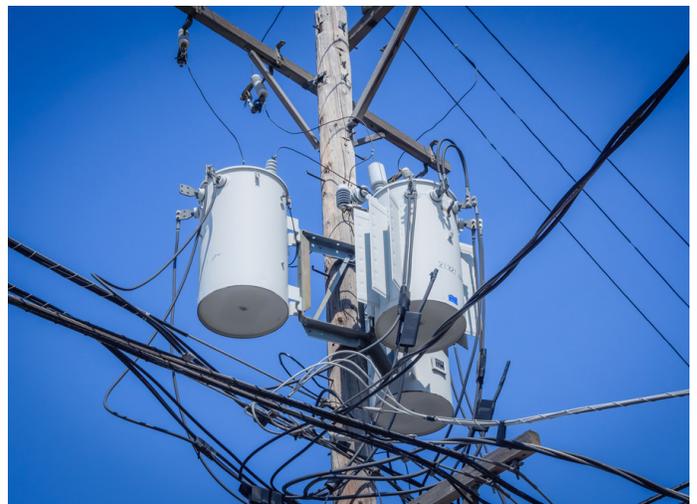
SOLUTION:

Greer and his colleagues soon decided it was time for a change and embarked on the search to find an

outage management solution (OMS) that would streamline back-office processes, integrate with pre-existing systems and ultimately improve customer service.

dataVoice was on their radar from the beginning, as AEC General Manager Greg Williams had connected with them multiple times throughout the years to discuss the possibility of modernizing his operation. This time, the utility was ready to act and chose to adopt the dataVoice OMS.

AEC had an interactive voice response system in place and leveraged advanced metering infrastructure data to pinpoint outages. The challenge for dataVoice would be integrating these platforms with the OMS. In the end, the process was executed seamlessly.





“With dataVoice, it was a clean integration,” Greer said.

Once the OMS was in place and fully integrated, dataVoice provided training to AEC employees to help them acclimate to the technology.

OUTCOMES:

After negotiating a slight learning curve, dispatchers became comfortable with the solution. Greer and the AEC team started seeing real results.

Office personnel, free from sorting through trouble tickets, could use mapped AMI data to quickly identify and resolve outages.

“That’s been one of the biggest impacts for us,” Greer said. “A lot of times we can isolate outages before [a member reports them].”

Plus, AEC’s dispatchers loved the new system.

“From their standpoint, it would be very hard to go back to the old way,” he explained.

Additionally, AEC personnel appreciated dataVoice’s commitment to providing superlative customer service.

“They excel in supporting customers,” Greer said. “They have never failed to quickly resolve any issues that we’ve had.”

Ultimately, the dataVoice OMS solution gave Greer and the staff at AEC the tools they needed to modernize their operation and continue a long tradition of providing power to the residents of eastern Tennessee.