



DATAVOICE HELPS AMERICA'S FIRST ELECTRIC CO-OP MOVE FORWARD

ABOUT:

The Alcorn County Electric Power Association serves 19,000 businesses and residents located in Alcorn County in North Mississippi. Established in 1934 through funding from the Tennessee Valley Authority, ACE Power Association carries the esteemed title of America's first electrical cooperative.

CHALLENGES:

Following the installation of new substation infrastructure, ACE Power Association Chief Operating Officer Jason Grisham looked into potential outage management system providers, intent on modernizing the cooperative's dispatch and field operations. Grisham and his colleagues, CEO Eddie Howard and CFO Sean McGrath, met with representatives from two vendors, including dataVoice International Director of Sales Ron Aiken. Grisham, Howard and McGrath ultimately decided to adopt the dataVoice OMS on account of its robust mobile capabilities.

“The linemen application, rolling out iPads—that’s where we wanted to head,” Grisham explained.

SOLUTION:

The implementation process unfolded relatively trouble-free. dataVoice was able to install the OMS and the accompanying interactive voice response platform with few issues. However, issues did crop up during the roll out of the linemen application, as some members of the ACE Power Association field team expressed skepticism over the proposed mobile workflows.

“The biggest challenge was putting mobile solutions in the hands of the linemen,” Grisham said. “Some take off with the technology while others are a little bit more resistant.”

dataVoice offered assistance here, providing hands-on training designed to empower field crews using the mobile application. Grisham reinforced these best practices through periodic instructional sessions. This two-pronged approach worked in the end, with linemen for the cooperative learning how to effectively integrate the cutting-edge tool into their everyday workflows. ACE Power Association went live with the dataVoice OMS, IVR and lineman and manager mobile applications in June 2017.



OUTCOMES:

The cooperative tested its new outage management tools soon after implementation, as a strong storm swept across Alcorn County, leaving a number of customers without power. Here, Grisham was able to deploy the manager mobile application, view active outages and quickly deploy crews. Of course, the dataVoice technology also garnered results outside of severe weather events. For instance, Grisham explained, crews with access to the linemen application now respond to multiple calls in field rather than returning to headquarters after every individual service trip, an operational change that has improved customer service and outage response times.

According to Grisham, the staff at ACE Power Association has grown to appreciate the dataVoice

mobile suite, despite the initial reluctance. Managers and field foremen are especially fond of these tools, as they facilitate the top-down operational visibility needed to run efficient and effective utility operations. Best of all, dataVoice continues to lend support whenever complications emerge.

“If I contact them, they respond and address the issue within a day or two,”
Grisham said. “And if we have any questions, they’re always there to help.”

In the end, dataVoice helped ACE Power Association move forward and continue its tradition of operational excellence.