



DATAVOICE HELPS AN APEX, NORTH CAROLINA UTILITY EXPAND ITS OPERATIONAL CAPABILITIES

ABOUT:

Town of Apex Electric Utilities serves approximately 20,895 commercial and residential customers located in and around Apex, North Carolina. Founded in 1917, the public utility manages three substations and maintains almost 700 miles of electrical service line.

CHALLENGES:

The local electric utility had been experiencing significant issues stemming from its small-scale dispatch operation, which Apex Electric Utilities Program Coordinator Emily Woody managed alone, with evening and weekend assistance from personnel at the town's 911 center.

“It was all me during the day and two dispatchers from the 911 center at night,” Woody explained.

This state of affairs not only adversely affected customer service but also put an undue burden

on Woody and her colleagues working in the emergency response department. The Town of Apex searched for an interactive voice response system to address this long-standing problem and eventually opted to partner with dataVoice.

SOLUTIONS:

The utility ultimately decided to implement multiple dataVoice products, including the IVR solution, outage management system, the linemen mobile application and the customer-facing mobile application. The installation process began in early 2017 and included one major roadblock: a good number of the Town's meters were not rooted to a geographic information system. dataVoice solved this problem by using data from the Apex customer information system to plot unmapped field fixtures. After overcoming this hurdle, implementation moved forward seamlessly and by July 2017, Woody and her coworkers had access to a full complement of cutting-edge utility management tools.



OUTCOMES:

Apex has seen considerable progress since installation. While residents continue to call the police department non-emergency number regularly during outage events, telephone traffic has fallen considerably thanks to the IVR and the customer portal. For instance, in the summer of 2018, the town experienced an outage that involved more than 600 customers yet only received 70 phone calls to the Towns 911 center. The linemen application has also been a success, as field crews now use the platform to communicate with customers and close

out service issues with little assistance from headquarters. Today, dataVoice continues to work with Apex to perfect their workflows and address any technological issues that arise.

“They offer excellent customer service and support,” Woody said. “Even at three o’clock in the morning.”

While Woody still acts as the backend administrator for Apex’s entire suite of dataVoice tools, the solutions have lightened her workload and bolstered customer service at the same time.