



DATAVOICE SUPPORTS GROWING NEW BERN, NORTH CAROLINA

ABOUT:

The Electric Department for New Bern, North Carolina, serves more than 21,000 commercial and residential customers distributed across Craven County. Founded in 1902, the organization was among the first city-owned and operated electrical utilities in the country.

CHALLENGES:

A growing customer base and new advanced meter infrastructure prompted New Bern to pursue outage management and interactive voice response technology back in 2015. The city needed solutions that streamlined control center operations and allowed management and field teams to take advantage of information generated by the recently implemented AMI platform. With these aims in mind, the southern city embarked on the request for proposal process, during which it encountered dataVoice International.

SOLUTION:

The software provider's proposed solution set included its OMS and IVR solutions, and the lineman mobile application. New Bern

reviewed the proposal and ultimately greenlit implementation. This process unfolded over the course of early 2016 without issue, according to New Bern Electric Department Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) Control Supervisor Mark Trail.

"It could not have gone any smoother," Trail said. "I've been in the IT industry for more than 30 years and this was probably the smoothest implementation of any software package I've dealt with."

The engineers for dataVoice managed to write robust integration interfaces and create an expansive yet seamless backend environment that facilitated optimal data flow. Trail explained that leadership and IT personnel contributed to this success, leveraging their collective experience and product knowledge to develop a deployment methodology that worked. However, there was a roadblock that required some implementation ingenuity. The AMI system was not communicating with the OMS and IVR solutions as planned due to



a technical quirk. To address this issue, engineers at the software provider connected directly with New Bern's AMI vendor and came up with an actionable solution in a matter of days.

The lineman mobile application deployment went well, despite some initial resistance from field crews.

The entire suite of tools went live in April 2016.

OUTCOMES:

The impact has been immense, Trail explained. The New Bern control center, which houses one staff member during everyday operations and two to three during emergency situations, has experienced an incoming call volume reduction of more than 90 percent post IVR implementation. The solution seems to meet customer needs as well, giving them timely outage information and negating the need for continual telephonic status checks. The dataVoice OMS platform has proven equally impactful, often giving field teams the ability to address outages before phones ring at the control center. The linemen at the New Bern Electric Department have taken well to the mobile application, especially those overseeing scheduled service activities, as it allows them to easily receive and process tickets and

communicate with dispatchers. And, the city has deployed the dataVoice solutions to great effect during multiple major weather events, including Hurricanes Florence and Michael.

While these operational gains have certainly excited Trail, it is the ongoing customer service that dataVoice provides that has left the biggest impression on him.

“We communicate constantly,” he explained. “To me, the vendor relationship is key and our relationship with dataVoice is phenomenal. If I send them an email about an issue, they create a ticket within minutes and offer assistance within 24 hours. I don’t get that kind of service from any other vendor, including those with substantially higher maintenance costs.”

With the dataVoice OMS, IVR and linemen mobile application in place, the New Bern Electric Department is poised for operational success and growth.