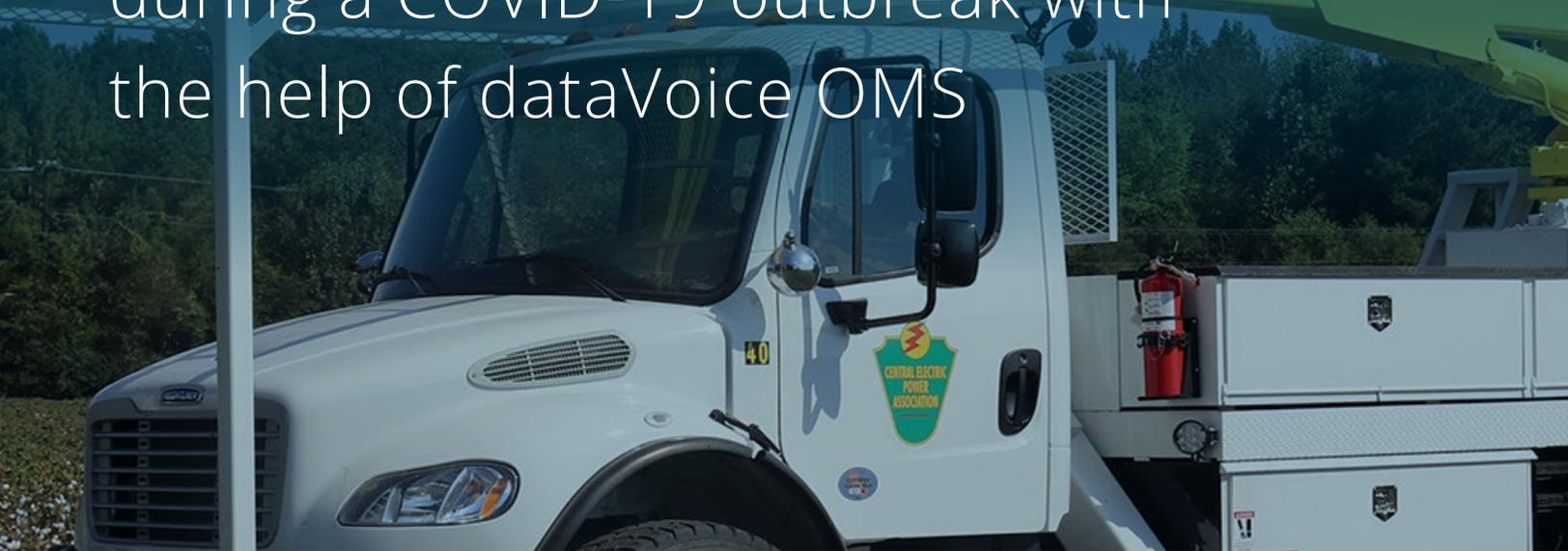


Central EPA stays open and safe during a COVID-19 outbreak with the help of dataVoice OMS



ABOUT



Central EPA is an electric power utility serving seven counties in Mississippi. The utility office, based in Carthage, MS, is responsible for providing power to over 37,000 people. Central EPA strives to keep the lights on for its customers, no matter the circumstances, and that promise was put to the test in the summer of 2020 when an outbreak of COVID-19 swept through the area, heavily affecting the staff.

LOCATION:

Carthage, MS

INDUSTRY:

Electrical Utility

POPULATION:

37,000 residents

CHALLENGES:

The original reason for adopting the dataVoice Outage Management System (OMS) was a need for data. Seeking an effective way to collect and analyze outage information, but one that would be user-friendly and easy to pick up, the utility selected dataVoice in 2018.

When the team first installed the new OMS, there was no inkling of the challenges that 2020 would bring, but having the technology in place would prove to be a vital lifeline.

SOLUTIONS:

Central EPA was drawn to dataVoice OMS by word of mouth testimonials from other utilities already using the system. After a demonstration of the OMS's capabilities proved impressive, the team went through a week of on-site training for its staff of 20. Every department within the organization has some access to the system, with managers, dispatchers, accounting staff and customer service reps among those able to harness the rich data from the OMS.

OUTCOMES:

For the first two years following the dataVoice implementation, the Central EPA team received the process improvements they were looking for, along with 24/7 assistance from the dataVoice team whenever there was a question. More accurate tracking and reporting of outages were the biggest advantages of the new data collection and access technologies. The utility also used the online customer portal to enable easy communication and outage reporting.

Then, in July of 2020, Central EPA was put to a serious test. Late July 1, the team worked through the night in the dispatch area to cope with the effects of a thunderstorm. By the following Monday, employees were displaying COVID-19 symptoms. By Tuesday, the test results came back and 11 people had tested positive.



Prior to us having dataVoice I'm not sure what we would have done. We had to relocate all of our dispatch operations. dataVoice gave us the ability to work remotely. Outside of these walls, we could still operate."

DALE SCOTT, MANAGER IT, GIS, DISPATCH, CENTRAL EPA

With that many staff members suffering from the virus and the office shut down, Central EPA had to change their strategy on the fly. Since dataVoice allows remote access, team members could log into the system remotely from their homes. They kept communications open though the crisis, with residents receiving seamless service, as if nothing had changed. In the end, there were no hospitalizations necessary among the Central EPA staff, and all 11 employees made a full recovery.

Future plans for the dataVoice implementation include a possible update to the customer portal and a data backup plan with redundant servers. Following the experience in June, the Central EPA and dataVoice relationship has already thrived in a trial by fire.



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