

Case Study American Electric Power

Improving Safety for Drivers and Customers with Vehicle Tracking



AssetWorks Inc., a long-time provider of wireless technologies for mobile workforces, partnered with American Electric Power (AEP) to install Global Positioning System/Automatic Vehicle Location (GPS/AVL) technology in 4600 service trucks dispersed among eleven US states.

Challenges

American Electric Power (AEP), one of the largest power companies in the United States, wanted to improve worker safety and reaction time to dangerous incidents, shorten the duration of customer outages, and reduce gas usage for their 4600-vehicle service fleet. To do this, they needed a mobile workforce management system that could display real-time vehicle location information, differentiate vehicle types on dispatchers' maps, provide in-vehicle directional prompts, and generate vehicle data reports to help better distribute crews based on job demands.

Solution

AEP implemented AssetWorks Field Service Solution, which includes GPS/AVL, mobile computing, telematic data, event management, and reporting capabilities. They also outfitted their vehicles with BBX, a stand-alone GPS/AVL and telematics data collection device. The Field Service Software captures data sent by BBX and displays vehicle icons on the dispatchers' existing maps. The Field Service Solution also integrates with AEP's Orbital database to collect data such as vehicle speed and the last known position of the vehicle to monitor driver behavior.

End Result

Call takers can now see which vehicle is closest to an incident when a call for service is received and dispatch the closest available worker immediately. This results in reduced fuel and overtime costs. In the case of a driver emergency, a dispatcher can determine the exact location of the vehicle in seconds and send help immediately. In addition, the system's ability to generate reports based on historical events allows dispatchers to see what resources are being used, and where and why they are being used, to minimize downtime and save money.

Overview

Fleet Size

4600 service trucks among 11 US states
5.3 million customers

Industry

Utility

Products

Field Service Solution
BBX

Return on Investment

- **Increased Driver Productivity**
- **Fewer Customer Complaints**
- **Quicker Response Time to Driver Emergencies**
- **Fewer Service Vehicles Damaged by Reckless Driving**
- **Improved Response Times to Public Contact or 'Wires Down' Incidents**

Client View

AssetWorks and AEP worked collaboratively to design and implement a solution that best fit the needs of American Electric Power. As a result, the solution adopted by AEP emphasizes vehicle tracking, vehicle data collection, and report generation. The tracking features offered by BBX yield quicker response times to driver emergencies and other incidents. In terms of fuel efficiency, AEP has the potential to save up to a million dollars per year in fuel costs.



Bob Burns, manager of AEP's Dolan Technology Center and former project manager of the fleet rollout, recalls some of the other immediate benefits of implementing the mobile workforce management system. "We've had stolen vehicles recovered with the system. For instance, one employee walked away from his vehicle but left his keys in because he thought he'd only be gone a moment. When he came back, the vehicle was gone. He called dispatch, and dispatch was able to relay the location information to the police department. It was recovered within minutes."¹

In addition to the cost-effective benefits that the Field Service Solution has brought to AEP's operations, perhaps the biggest improvement has been in the visibility and safety of its fleet workers. In a particular example, an AEP driver who had slipped and broken his hip on a patch of ice outside of his truck was attended to almost immediately using real-time visibility.

AEP chose AssetWorks based on experience, financial stability, and the value they place on research and development. In addition, AEP wanted a vendor that would offer a phased implementation approach, work collaboratively during the installation, and follow up with training and support.

"Many of the vendors we considered are hardware vendors looking to partner with a software vendor or vice versa," says Burns. "[AssetWorks] offers both the hardware and software components of the fleet management solution. We liked that they themselves offered everything we'd need for the entire project."ⁱⁱ

I. "Fleet Management Drives Down Costs" by Sarah Howland. In Field Technologies. September 2011.

II. Ibid

“AssetWorks offers both the hardware and software components of the fleet management solution. We liked that they themselves offered everything we'd need for the entire project.”

Bob Burns, Manager Dolan Technology Center, AEP

For more information, contact an AssetWorks representative today at 610.687.9202 or visit us online at www.assetworks.com

AssetWORKS

998 Old Eagle School Road, Suite 1215 | Wayne, PA 19087

www.assetworks.com | 610.687.9202