



MOBILE WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT HELPS **TAYLOR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE** WITH GOAL TO INSTALL 17,000 SURGE PROTECTORS TO HOMES ACROSS ABILENE, TEXAS



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THE TEXAS COOPERATIVE IS ONE QUARTER OF THE WAY THROUGH A MASSIVE SURGE PROTECTION ROLLOUT THAT WILL ELIMINATE 17,000 PAPER ORDERS

Located in the rural region of central Texas, Taylor Electric Cooperative serves a community with 10,000 members in and around Abilene, Texas. This area experiences severely dry weather conditions and frequent lightning, a combination that causes a problem of house fires in the town. To deal with this issue, the Board of Directors voted to install a line side surge protector on every meter to safeguard them from voltage spikes caused by lightning. However, the cooperative faced a problem with an installation project of that proportion. How would they efficiently process the 17,000 orders?

CHALLENGE

In 2015, ready to roll out a major effort to protect meters with surge protectors, Taylor Electric saw an opportunity to look at ways to apply mobile technology to eliminate paper services orders, increase efficiency and empower the hardworking customer service representatives.

“We needed a way to manage and organize the service orders,” System Analyst Maria Trulove said. “During my initial contact with SEDC product support, I told them we were going to be installing 17,000 surge protectors, and asked if I could create these service orders in bulk or if I would have to go to every single account and create one. They offered the mobile system and it was a good trade off. We still have to create the service orders on the account, but we don’t have 17,000 pieces of paper floating around.”



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SOLUTION

With SEDC's assistance, the co-op went digital in the back office for their surge protector service orders. Using SEDC's UPN platform, the Mobile Workforce Management system connects via seamless integration with the CIS system, allowing them to automatically process and close paperless service orders.

TRAINING

"There were a few glitches the first couple days. Typically when you put someone through a training class, they say, 'yeah we've got it, this is easy,' and then the next day they forget what they learned the day before," Trulove said. Having iPads in the field was something new for the workers. "They were used to going out and doing the work and having somebody else take care of the paperwork. Now they won't do without the new system. If something were to happen to it and we didn't have it anymore, they would pitch a fit."

HOW IT WORKS

With the mobile workforce system at Taylor Electric, CSRs create service orders the same way they normally do in UPN's CIS, but instead of routing it to a particular department like operations or engineering, they route it to the "mobile" department. When they route the order to mobile, it shows up electronically in the service dispatch screen. The orders appear in blue on the screen to categorize them as unassigned orders. The dispatchers see there are new service orders to be completed, so they dispatch them to the technicians working in the field. The service orders are completed electronically in the field, and paper service orders don't have to come back to the office to be scanned in the system. The service order is electronically sent from the field to the office and is updated in UPN, so the CSR can immediately see that the surge protector has been installed or if there were any issues with it. Once one service order is completed, the technician can quickly move on to the next one.

The benefits are clear after this project that paperless is better.

RESULTS

So far, Taylor Electric has installed 4,000 surge protectors on their meters, about one fourth of the entire implementation. Trulove says the cooperative can't even put a number on the time and money the mobile workforce system has saved the workers at their office so far. Instead of having thousands of paper service orders sitting around pending completion, they can do everything quickly and electronically through an organized system. At the office they can update, view and assign service orders in real time, driving the efficiencies that help reduce vehicle downtime in the field. Eliminating the redundant tasks associated with service orders, Trulove said the solution has improved overall operational efficiency.

LOOKING AHEAD

Taylor Electric plans to continue to save paper and time by using mobile workforce for more than just surge protector service orders, including connect, disconnect or meter change services. They currently have the capability to run every type of service order through the mobile system, but completing this will require training before it can be executed. "We plan to add more specific service order types to mobile one at a time. The benefits are clear after this project that paperless is better," said Trulove.



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