

NORRIS PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT REALIZE UP TO 75% IN TIME SAVINGS

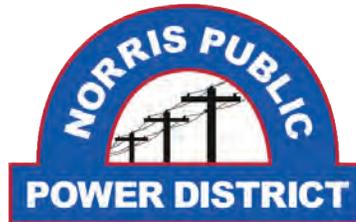
WITH THE HELP OF MOTION® BY XPLORE™
RUGGED TABLET PCS



**XPLORE TABLETS GO
ANYWHERE THE JOB
TAKES YOU**

“What it comes down to for us is being able to enhance our customer service and increase our efficiency, and the Motion by Xplore Tablet PCs help us do just that,” said Krupicka. “The tablets streamline our entire workflow, from the office to the field and back again, reducing errors, increasing productivity and saving time and costs.”

*— Manager of Consumer and
Business Information Systems,
Norris Public Power District*



Company **Norris Public Power District**
Industry **Utility - Electric**
Location **Nebraska, USA**

BACKGROUND

Norris Public Power District is the proud provider of wholesale and retail electric service to 44 communities in five counties across southeast Nebraska. Dedicated to providing its 18,000 customers with safe, reliable and affordable energy service, the non-profit, publicly-owned company strives to keep rates low while providing the highest quality of service, which enables customers to achieve their ultimate business and personal goals.

CHALLENGE

A paper-based process in need of updating

The majority of Norris Public Power District's 77 employees are linemen who spend the entire day in the field completing their assigned work, which includes constructing new facilities, tackling necessary upgrades and repairs, performing maintenance work, reading, repairing and exchanging meters as well as performing meter cutoffs and disabling service. Previously, the linemen were equipped with paper-based service orders, which contained all pertinent job information. Each morning, the linemen gathered the service orders for the day, and with stacks of papers in hand, spent the day performing their assigned tasks and filling in paperwork by hand. The linemen would return the service orders the next day to one of the District's five offices, where customer service representatives (CSRs) would manually upload the information into the database.

"With any paper-based process – especially with the amount of paper we had moving in and out of the offices – comes an increase in the potential for something to go wrong, such as forms being misplaced or lost and the possibility of not being able to read a lineman's handwriting," said Ryan Krupicka, Manager of Consumer and Business Information Systems, Norris Public Power District. "We also had to deal with storing an ever-increasing amount of paperwork, which took up valuable space."

On more than one occasion, Norris Public Power District had to send a lineman out twice on the same job because the paperwork was illegible or misplaced either in the office or by the lineman. The District also faced communication issues between its CSRs and linemen when it came to disabling service for customer disconnections.

SOLUTION

Motion by Xplore Rugged Tablet PCs: mobile, compatible, powerful and rugged

With its entire meter service depending on the paper-based process, Norris Public Power District knew it needed an upgrade in order to deliver on its goal of providing the highest quality of service possible. The District began looking at rugged laptops, but found the design to be too heavy and cumbersome for field use. After expanding the search to include tablets, Norris Public Power District came across the Motion® Rugged Tablet PC lineup and found exactly what it was looking for – a Windows®-based tablet powered by the Intel® Core™ i7 vPro™ processor that was compatible and powerful enough to run its software, while still lightweight enough to carry and use while mobile.

Krupicka also cited the tablet's rugged features and View Anywhere® display as major deciding factors. "The linemen are outside in all types of weather and needed a device that could stand up to rain, snow, dust, wind as well as being dropped and banged, and we haven't had one maintenance issue yet," he noted. "The display is the best we've ever seen, helping the linemen read the tablet clearly even in direct sunlight."

When not in use, the tablets are docked and charged in RAM® Mounts' Locking Mobile Docks, mounted in the trucks.

RESULTS

A new, automated workflow helps create up to 75% time savings

Now, instead of carrying around stacks of service orders, a portion of the linemen rely on the Motion by Xplore Rugged Tablet PCs to provide them with real-time access to their schedules, service orders and

business-critical information as well as the ability to process meter readings and update the database from the field. Additionally, if a new service order comes in at any point during the day, a CSR can assign it in real time based on a lineman's location, which is pulled from the software's integrated GPS functionality.

"Once the linemen leave the office in the morning, they are typically in the field for the entire day and previously, could only work on the service orders in their hands," explained Krupicka. "With the paper-based process, the linemen would not come back to the office to get more service orders to work on, and any new ones had to be processed the next day. Now, the CSRs can assign service orders as they come in, updating the linemen via the tablet while they are in the field."

According to Krupicka, with the real-time access, insight and communication capabilities that the Motion Rugged Tablet PCs provide, a service order that previously took three or four days can now be completed in a single day. Additionally, the District no longer worries about unnecessarily disabling a customer's power as the CSRs can update or delete a service order in real time, which automatically notifies the linemen via the tablet. This helps the District continue to provide excellent service through improved access to dynamic information.

"That time savings means we can increase the number of customers we service on a daily basis and provide more efficient and accurate service in general, which means enhanced customer service," said Krupicka. Not only is Norris Public Power District saving costs on the reduction of paper and printing, but increased efficiency means the District is saving the employee hours it takes to shuffle papers between the CSRs and linemen, complete a service order or rectify a mistake."

With the Motion by Xplore Rugged Tablet PCs, the linemen don't have to worry about entering incorrect data since the system won't let them, paperwork isn't lost or misplaced by office personnel or the linemen, and since all the information entered on the tablet is converted to legible text, we no longer have any issues reading handwriting," said Krupicka. "This means we don't have to send a lineman back into the field to fix an error or double check information, which means we're saving fuel costs for the trucks and the cost of additional employee hours." Increasing

BENEFITS

Up to 75 percent time savings

Service orders that previously took three or four days can now be completed in a single day

Time savings translates to cost savings

Increased employee productivity and satisfaction

Enhanced customer service

"The linemen are outside in all types of weather and needed a device that could stand up to rain, snow, dust, wind as well as being dropped and banged."



employee productivity and satisfaction. According to Krupicka, the rugged tablets help the linemen increase productivity and make better decisions while out in the field. “Instead of simply completing their assigned tasks, the linemen are now equipped with the tools to diagnose a potential problem and are able to make any necessary changes on the spot. This alleviates additional trips to the same location for work that could have been done on the first trip. Again, this is just another example of how the tablets save us time and costs and help enhance customer service.”

If a problem with a tablet does arise in the field, Krupicka is able to access the tablet remotely and answer any questions in real time. “The Motion by Xplore Rugged Tablet PCs definitely help the linemen and our organization work more efficiently and have increased employee satisfaction as well as make my job easier from an IT perspective.”

WHAT'S NEXT

Looking to the future, Norris Public Power District plans on utilizing the rugged tablet PC's integrated camera for enhanced documentation when dealing with meter tampering issues. The District also plans to incorporate its outage management system with the tablets. During a storm, for example, Norris Public Power District will be able to alert the linemen in real time via the tablets when customers experience power outages, where the outages are occurring and when power has been restored. The District will be able to more efficiently manage the linemen and restore power to its customers sooner.

“What it comes down to for us is being able to enhance our customer service and increase our efficiency, and the Motion by Xplore Tablet PCs help us do just that,” said Krupicka. “The tablets streamline our entire workflow, from the office to the field and back again, reducing errors, increasing productivity and saving time and costs.”

