

Hydroplants automate notifications to customers, public officials

Columbus, Ohio – June 16, 2015 – Even when utilities try their best to get word out about a planned outage or change in water flow level, customers often say they never received information. Door hangers left by utilities on front doors can easily fall off or go unnoticed by consumers using a different entry point. Manually dialing municipalities downstream from a hydroelectric power plant requires time away from other operations, sometimes up to an hour or more.

For utilities like Wisconsin Public Service Corporation (WPS), a subsidiary of Integrys Energy Group, and other utilities the old communication methods have given way to an automated approach known as the ARCOS® [SIREN® mass notification module](#). SIREN Mass Calling is part of the SaaS-based [ARCOS Callout and Scheduling Suite](#) and automatically uploads contact lists held by a hydroplant's other software systems and converts the data into customized spreadsheets. With the spreadsheets uploaded into ARCOS, utility companies can parse the lists and use SIREN Mass Calling to create and send phone and email alerts to update customers or public officials about outages or emergencies.

"Before implementing SIREN, we were hand dialing customers, sheriffs, emergency management and business owners to let them know about changes in water flow levels at our hydroplants along the Wisconsin River," said Len Socha, director of technical services for WPS. "With SIREN Mass Calling automatically making the calls, we cut our work on one list alone from an hour to 15 minutes."

With SIREN Mass Calling, customers, municipal officials and employees can acknowledge receipt of a call by pressing a single number on their home or mobile phone dial pad. Even when someone answers but hangs up, SIREN records and relays this to the utility for a follow-up call.

A dispatch supervisor for a Midwest utility added, "We initiated a SIREN call about the interruption in service to 117 customers along with an estimated restoration time. Based on past experience, we estimate customer inquiry calls were reduced by 75 to 80 percent.

"An advantage to SIREN versus a standard 'phone dialer' is that SIREN doesn't rely on our internal phone system to make calls," added the dispatch supervisor. "Our phone system has a limited number of lines for inbound and outbound calls, and we can't use all those for outbound calls."

If a utility's employees have to work off-site or evacuate their buildings in an emergency, the SaaS-based SIREN Mass Calling solution is available to notify employees, emergency responders and customers.

About ARCOS LLC

Twenty-four of the top 25 U.S. utilities rely on the ARCOS® Callout and Scheduling Suite. When the power goes out, a gas leak is reported or another emergency occurs, the award-winning, SaaS-based ARCOS Suite instantaneously finds, assembles and tracks repair crews, reducing outage interruptions and improving restoration time for electric, gas and power plant utilities. For more information, visit www.arcos-inc.com or call 614-396-5500.

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