

RESPOND. RESTORE. REPORT.

Right Sized. Right Priced.
Right Solution for Public and Co-Op Utilities

Lee County
Electric Cooperative

CO-OP ELIMINATES GRIEVANCES BY AUTOMATING CALLOUT AND REPORTING

OVERVIEW

The process for scheduling and dispatch at Lee County (Fla.) Electric Cooperative (LCEC) has always worked. In fact, LCEC has always been able to maintain the approximately 8,000 miles of energized line it owns in Southwest Florida.

BUT... there was room for improving the scheduling and dispatch process for the co-op's supervisors and nearly 60 linemen and apprentices.

CHALLENGES

Historically, LCEC always saw delays with its restoration process, costing time and money and making it difficult for managers to get a global view of what was happening on their watch. The hurdles included:

- No easy way to manage callout rules or track the locations of resources which caused mistakes that cost additional time and money.
- Severe summer storms requiring a large amount of the LCEC workforce to report for emergency work, often complicating schedules.
- Distributing callout work fairly and equitably was not precise or automated, resulting in costly errors.
- Several bargaining unit grievances each year, on average, due to errors with manual callouts.
- Rising overtime costs and SAIDI, weren't maximizing value for members.

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SOLUTION

Previously, LCEC relied on an inexpensive system designed to dial line personnel when storms, power outages and other events struck. But the tool offered no reporting, metrics or analysis - so while it was inexpensive, it was racking up expensive problems to solve. Once LCEC implemented cloud-based software that automatically tracks the status of linemen, they went without filing a single grievance related to callouts. The system, developed by ARCOS LLC, also launches programmable callouts to bring linemen together in crews when needed according to LCEC rules and bargaining unit agreements.

Along with implementing ARCOS Resource Management, LCEC looked at its daily, monthly and annual workload. Ideally, the utility wanted to get most of its work done during the day, but also needed to reduce the overtime burden and improve SAIDI. LCEC's goal was to staff most efficiently to meet these competing demands. The utility reviewed data that it had on hand – types of work, available days and hours, and cycle-time on electrical lines that required service call outs. Then, managers arranged shifts to be staggered throughout the day to best address those competing demands. Further, shifts were designed to change with the weather, so to speak, to meet the challenges of the higher callout rate during the summer. Ultimately LCEC's analysis helped it restructure its shifts to obtain 24-hour coverage with 12 starting times.

RESULTS

The ARCOS solution gives LCEC supervisors and dispatchers a view of personnel on-site, personnel due on-site, linemen on sick leave and workers on vacation. This also enables LCEC to prepare long-term planning for crews and efficiently manage personnel leave.

Since implementing ARCOS, LCEC has not had a single grievance filed related to callouts. ARCOS also provides up-to-the-minute, accurate statistics on callout. Before ARCOS, the utility's callout data collection was prone to errors, since LCEC compiled statistics manually. The quality of the callout statistics has vastly improved and has become a useful tool throughout the organization. By managing its callouts and scheduling with ARCOS, LCEC's callout response from the linemen has also improved.

The reports from the ARCOS solution also tabulate LCEC's turnout ratio for callout (i.e., the percentage of people LCEC has answering calls). LCEC aspires to have a 33 percent turnout ratio on callout. When linemen are not meeting that threshold, the utility can pull the data to show linemen both the callout goal and current performance; and, the co-op can discuss areas for improvement.

ARCOS provides solutions specifically suited to Public Power and Co-Op utilities.

Learn how ARCOS can help at www.arcos-inc.com or call us at 1-614-396-5500.