COMPANY:
Central Georgia EMC
(CGEMC)

AUTOMATING THE VERY MANUAL PROCESS OF CALLING OUT CREWS

CHALLENGE:

- Relied on system operators and supervisors to manually call workers available for restoration work and lacked data capture relating to productivity

SOLUTION:

- Implemented the ARCOS Callout and Scheduling Suite, allowing the co-op to automatically contact available workers in the wake of an after-hours event

RESULTS:

- Restored power 30 to 45 minutes sooner with ARCOS, while more than 80% of their workforce responded within two minutes

CENTRAL GEORGIA EMC TRIMS TIME OFF OUTAGES WITH AUTOMATED CALLOUT

COLUMBUS, Ohio – November 9, 2020 – ARCOS® LLC, the market leader for utility and critical infrastructure resource-management solutions, has implemented its ARCOS Callout and Scheduling Suite for Central Georgia Electric Membership Corporation, so the co-op can automatically contact available workers to restore service in the wake of any sudden event or an incident outside normal business hours.

"We run a very lean organization and had a pop-up storm requiring an all-hands call for help; using ARCOS, more than 80 percent of our workforce responded within two minutes," said John Harkness, senior vice president of Distribution Services at Jackson, Ga.-based Central Georgia EMC (CGEMC). "With our manual method, that all-hands call would've taken up to an hour to complete; ARCOS helped us restore power 30 to 45 minutes sooner, which has a positive impact on CAIDI, SAIDI, customer satisfaction and revenue."

Before installing the ARCOS SaaS platform, CGEMC – a non-union, 59,000-meter customer-owned electric cooperative serving 14 counties south of Atlanta – relied on its system operators and supervisors to manually call crews to find workers available for restoration work. With ARCOS, CGEMC system operators push a button on their keyboard or mobile device and let the automated callout system organize the calls for help, which has also improved the rate at which workers accept calls.

"Our employees wanted a better way of knowing when they're needed after hours and where they fall in the callout rotation," added Harkness. "We wanted a seamless, efficient way to contact employees outside normal working hours, get a response and track the outcome."

According to Harkness, his line department's employee performance appraisals, and ultimately salary adjustments, rely partially on how line workers respond to after-hours callouts. Prior to ARCOS, the co-op's operators and crew leaders documented (often with pen and paper) whom they called, how often and the response. Typically, the process occurred outside the office, at a crew leader's home by phone requiring the caller to bring documentation into the office and type notes into a database. Documentation errors could undermine employees' confidence in performance

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and salary reviews. Since automating callout tracking, Harkness says the errors are gone and employee confidence has improved. Using ARCOS reports, the co-op publishes a weekly scorecard of callout responses on an electronic billboard that employees see by job classification. The co-op resets the scorecard as each performance review period begins.

"Some of our lower performers in years past are now doing far better and pointing to the scoreboard," remarks Harkness.

Inside the ARCOS software, CGEMC was able to construct a variety of callout types: on-call; volunteer; assistance-needed; and all-call. The co-op can launch each type in seconds and get a response in minutes. "Automation gets everyone equally participating in callouts and improves our restoration times, which means happy customers and reductions in CAIDI and SAIDI," says Harkness.

Harkness also says automating the callout process gave his co-op a way to think about how the non-union, member-owned utility does business. Even before ARCOS, CGEMC discussed speeding up response times and improving the capture of data related to productivity, so the co-op could take the burden off the staff. With a non-union workforce, CGEMC had flexibility in transforming its callout approach. Implementing ARCOS provided CGEMC with the chance to improve processes for its line department and managers.

"We knew we wanted to better distribute work and reward performance, but we couldn't manage that with a manual system," recalls Harkness. "Automation, specifically ARCOS, gave us software to track exactly what's happening and acknowledge and reward employees for their contributions."