



SUCCESS STORY

CARY UTILITIES, NORTH CAROLINA

Find out more about Field Services

Simplifying Safe Water Management with AMCS Field Services

Like so many towns across the US, Cary's Utilities Department is busy supplying safe water services to its citizens. In order to do so, it operates and maintains a variety of water, wastewater and reclaimed water treatment facilities.

Naturally, keeping these facilities in good working order requires meticulous inspection of the town's wastewater infrastructure, however, with a large number of non-compliance violations and limited staffing, Cary's utilities team were finding themselves overwhelmed and under-resourced.

Fortunately, with help from AMCS Field Services software, the utilities team was able to turn the tables on this tricky situation. Not only did they increase efficiency with smart maintenance and inspection scheduling, but with intuitive software and simplified onboarding, they were also able to do more with less staff, noticeably increasing productivity.

We spoke to Maria Vanderloop, a member of Cary's hard working utilities department to find out exactly how the team are benefiting from this innovative, cloud-based technology.

An Ambitious Plan for Quality

Operating an effective wastewater treatment system is always a challenge, but with a large restaurant infrastructure, the town of Cary had a tough job to ensure its sewer system was clean and clear with minimal fat deposits, which can cause sewer overflows.

Working with customers is an important part of preventing grease build-up and with a keen focus on quality, the Cary team already ran a program of regular inspections. Unfortunately, the level of non-compliance was higher than expected. Of the restaurant infrastructure the team oversaw, 32% of customers were non-compliant, which was well above the organisation's expectations.

Maria had ambitious plans to lower non-compliance violations across Cary's Fats, Oils & Grease Program, however, as she explained, making headway was hampered by an outdated and disparate IT system.

"The situation with the team was painful," she revealed, as any attempts to streamline operations and get more of the right work done were constrained by a complex administrative process. Combine this with limited staffing and it began to seem impossible to boost efficiency.

Complex Data Processes Were Holding Cary Back

Using their existing systems, Maria noticed that crews were bouncing back and forth across town performing inspections and follow-on tasks with no regard for the proximity of work. In fact, work scheduling had no logical prioritization as re-occurring work orders were scheduled based on completion date alone.

Furthermore, incomplete customer data was leading to wasted resources as Maria's team couldn't provide comprehensive inspection reports to customers that required several actions to correct non-compliance. This resulted in multiple subsequent follow-up inspections to help customers achieve compliance.

At the heart of the problem were Cary's complex administrative processes. The town actually operated several systems – one for work orders and another for inspections, with a MS Access Database that consolidated the results of the two.

At the time, even though Cary employed a GIS/work order administrator, there was no obvious way to take advantage of geospatial data for inspection scheduling. Plus, data transcription and cleaning led to hours or even days of extra effort each month.

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Delays were inevitable and when Maria wanted to change a process or collect a new piece of data from the field, she needed to deal with a separate work order administrator, which depending on their workload, could set her team's progress back even further.

With all these challenges and little progress on reducing non-compliance, Maria was worried about the growing risk of a commercial area sewer overflow. Plus, Cary was growing and with the community thriving, Maria and her team wanted to ensure that confidence in their utility remained high.

Taking Control with AMCS Field Services

After assessing her situation, Maria decided, "It was time to do things differently". She selected AMCS Field Services, formerly known as Utility Cloud after conducting research. "It was a natural choice to go with AMCS," she explained, "based on the success our peers were seeing with this solution."

Moreover, AMCS Field Services asset management software seemed the best option in the market to resolve her list of challenges and received high marks from users in the field. As a result, Maria and her team implemented AMCS Field Services in 2017 with impressive results.

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The Benefits of an Efficiency Boosting Asset Maintenance Solution

Maria's staff quickly got to work and realized several successful outcomes – some anticipated, and some more unexpected.

Achieved time savings with smart scheduling

With AMCS Field Services, Cary was able to build routes

based on geographic proximity of assets, increasing technician productivity. Additionally, tasks were automatically triggered across teams to ensure that the right follow-ups occurred on-time.

Increased operational transparency

Intelligent reporting ensured Maria's office was better equipped to track progress against common goals. Additionally, Cary's GIS group was able to rely on field data collected by AMCS Field Services to ensure all assets in Cary's Asset System of Record were accurately captured. This helps to ensure that future work and planning efforts align with needs of the infrastructure.

Delivered insights to other utility groups

In fact, Maria's team were even able to collect critical data for other departments while performing inspections on wastewater infrastructure. As an example, when a technician performed a FOG inspection, they also identified MS4 compliance issues in nearby infrastructure, delivering vital information to the stormwater division to help them prioritize their work and increase efficiency.

Enhanced data quality

With significantly fewer systems and less steps to achieve any process, Maria's group dramatically reduced the number of errors and data clean-up tasks associated with managing operational data. What used to take 6 people, now takes 4 people to maintain data quality and reporting standards.

Introduced intuitive workflows

With standardized workflows, onboarding time was significantly reduced. A new employee can locate most of the information needed to perform their daily work in one place. Furthermore, when Maria needs to make changes to workflows, or to adjust scheduling, automation, or reporting, she no longer needs to go through multiple departments. She and key members of her team can make adjustments on the fly.

Increased customer satisfaction

By proactively addressing items such as broken cleanout caps that can lead to odour problems, Maria was able to prevent issues and associated customer complaints. With the tools to get more of the right work done, at the right time, the team were able to work preventatively, increasing customer satisfaction across the town of Cary.

Compliance

Cary reduced non-compliance to 21%, marking a 34% decrease on non-compliance incidents.

Uptime

There have been 0 commercial area sanitary sewer overflows since implementation.

Efficiency

Inspections per year increased by over 300, with 4 people doing the admin work that used to take 6.

Learn how AMCS Field Services could benefit your utility team

AMCS Field Services provides an effective fixed asset management solution for the utilities industry. Whether your utility provides water, natural gas, electricity, or a combination of all three – our software solution provides your team with visibility into field operations, sample management tracking, and the health of your infrastructure.

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