MOTOROLA

CASE STUDY:
PALMETTO ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
LOW COUNTRY/SOUTH CAROLINA

CANOPY
Motorola Wireless Broadband Platform

SCADA MANAGEMENT | WIRELESS AMR | T1 REPLACEMENT | VOICE OVER IP

THE CANOPY SYSTEM HANDLES IT ALL

SITUATION:

Founded by enterprising rural residents in 1940 to bring power to South Carolina's Low Country, Palmetto Electric Cooperative has grasped the importance of innovative technology and productive partnerships for decades. Ten years after it first ran lines to rural Hampton County, it electrified Hilton Head, setting the stage for the island's rapid growth.

Today, this customer-owned cooperative serves nearly 60,000 in a 3-county area that weaves together mainland and offshore. Palmetto's relationships range from purchasing electricity generated by Santee Cooper to forging an alliance with Touchstone Energy's national network of 600 co-ops. And for the past 25 years, Palmetto has relied on Motorola as a partner for progressive products and superior support.
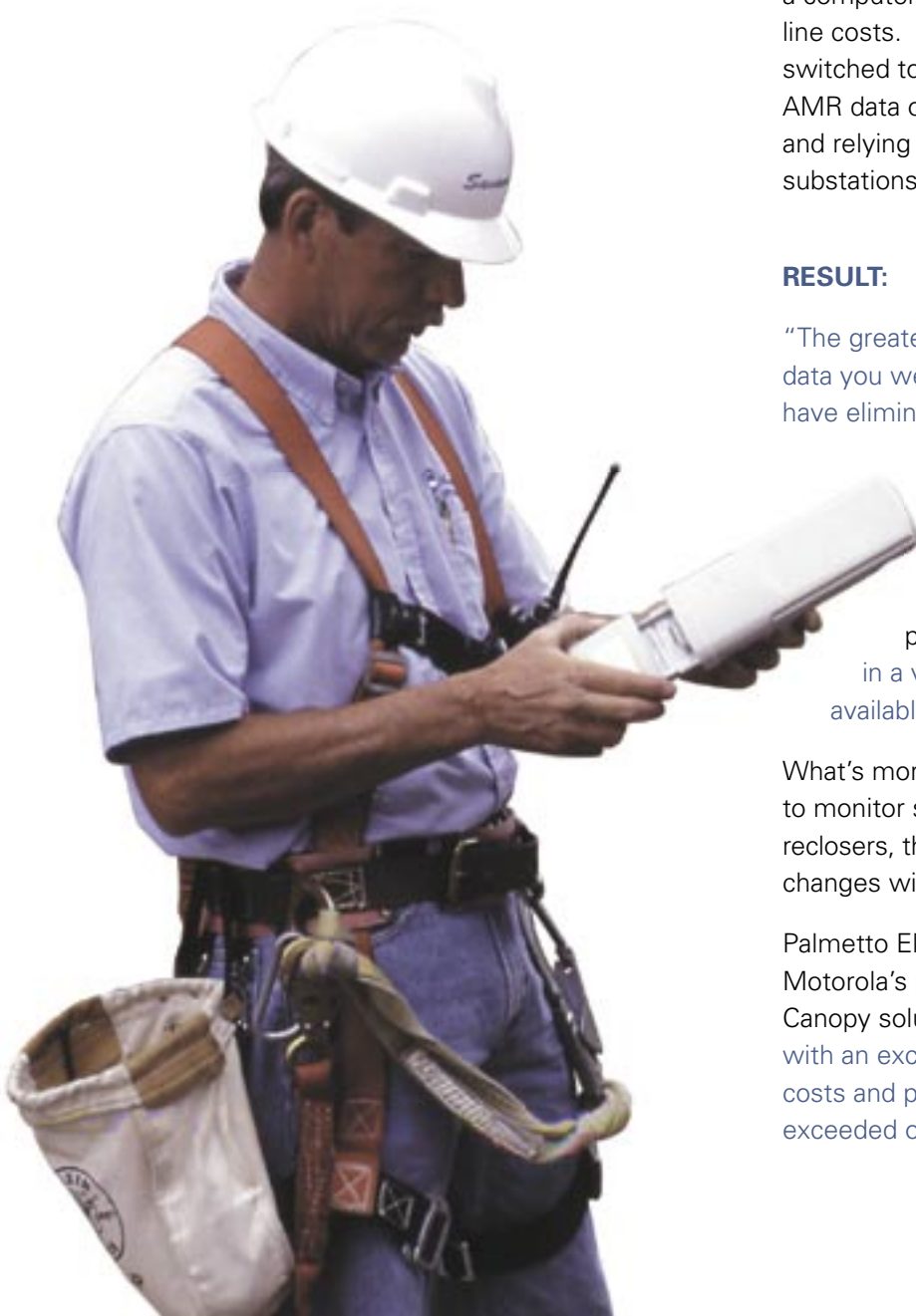
Palmetto wanted capabilities to beat the bandwidth. Specifically, to increase bandwidth to its substations for the automated meter reading (AMR) system. Its older radio system was used for polled data, too slow to provide the speed of broadband to transmit data from substations to its main office. Other choices, such as phone lines and T1 lines, were cost-prohibitive and problematic.

This proactive utility also sought ways to save costs on SCADA and mine the wealth of information at its 25 substations spanning 650 square miles. Could Palmetto cut down on time-consuming trips to substations and achieve data connectivity with one cost-effective network? Would the system grow as they added voice over IP?

WITH SPEED, RELIABILITY AND COST-SAVINGS TO BEAT THE BANDWIDTH.

"Canopy was more cost-effective, its payback period was short and it's a very reliable system, easy to maintain and easy to program."

– **GARY JEGER**
VICE PRESIDENT OF INFORMATION SYSTEMS
PALMETTO ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

SOLUTION:

The Canopy system was the one solution that met myriad requirements. "We looked at the options," says Gary Jeger, Vice President of Information Systems, "and Canopy was less expensive and offered higher bandwidth. We also looked at our needs in the future and Canopy was more cost-effective, its payback period was short and it's a very reliable system, easy to maintain and easy to program."

Jeger emphasizes how quick and easy it was to install the Canopy system, likening it to a plug-and-play device that doesn't require licensing and seamlessly extends a computer network without monthly fees or high phone line costs. Since its deployment a year ago, Palmetto has switched to running its SCADA system and accessing AMR data over Canopy, using it as a T1 replacement, and relying on it for backhaul and point-to-point between substations and the main office.

RESULT:

"The greatest advantage is the ability to have access to data you weren't able to before," says Gary Jeger. "We have eliminated a lot of travel; we now access data in five minutes across 90 miles, end to end." Walk-up meter readings that used to take a week are completed in hours. This is critical given the number of transient reads Palmetto handles – over 30% of their customers are part-time residents. "Now meters can be read in a very short time period, something that is not available with dial-up AMR," adds Jeger.

What's more, because Palmetto uses the Canopy system to monitor substations remotely and handle electronic reclosers, their personnel can access records and make changes without driving to the site, laptop in hand.

Palmetto Electric Cooperative's Vice President believes Motorola's partnership approach was invaluable to the Canopy solution's success. "We received a quality product with an excellent support network that helped us reduce costs and pass savings on to our customers. It certainly exceeded our expectations."

"Canopy is a solution that is cost-effective, has the bandwidth requirements we need and allows us access to substation data we previously were not able to bring back, such as video surveillance."
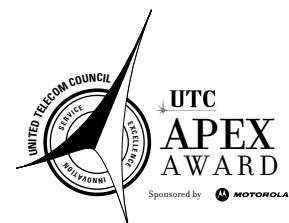
– GARY JEGER/VICE PRESIDENT OF INFORMATION SYSTEMS, PALMETTO ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

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