

Indiana Water Corporation Prioritizes Efficient Operations and Enhanced Customer Service with Xylem Technology

SENSUS FLEXNET COMMUNICATION NETWORK AIDS SILVER CREEK'S CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Reliable service can be the difference between a frustrated customer and a satisfied one for utilities. With a population of 20,000, hilly terrain and millions of gallons of water to manage, there is little room for error. That's why [Silver Creek Water Corporation](#) in Southern Indiana is always striving for continuous improvement.

Silver Creek Water's commitment to reliably track their customers' water usage has led to their more than 40-year partnership with [Sensus](#), a Xylem brand.

"Time is money, safety and efficiency," said Silver Creek Water Corporation Manager, Scott Ham. "We are now able to scale back hundreds of hours of labor into about half a day's work, and not only are we doing it faster, but the data that we are getting is more accurate than ever before."

Navigating challenges

The corporation's transition from manual meter reading to automated meter reading (AMR) began in 2001 while navigating a growing customer base and high employee turnover.

As technology improved, Silver Creek wanted to keep up and upgraded the system again in 2015 by deploying the [FlexNet® communication network](#) in conjunction with [iPERL®](#) residential water meters and [Sensus Analytics](#). The solution allows Silver Creek to manage and monitor meters remotely for enhanced operational efficiency and improved customer service.

"We created a more open line of communication with our customers through the use of Sensus Analytics" said Ham. "When questions arise, we simply open the application here in the office and pull up the dashboard that shows our customers exactly what their water usage looks like down to the gallons per minute."

Ham explained the smart utility network not only saves them time and money, but it completely transforms their standard of service.

"Using FlexNet, we don't have to run crews from site to site, which saves us costs on fuel, truck maintenance and labor," said Ham. "Reducing the use of equipment and the need for extra manpower saves us tens of thousands of dollars each year."



Silver Creek Meter Specialist Aaron Orman is all for smart digital solutions. He can remotely assess meters and locate potential issues from the comfort of the office rather than making multiple trips throughout his Southern Indiana service area.

CHALLENGE

Improve water system to remotely manage operations and address water loss

SOLUTION

Deploy a smart utility network anchored by the FlexNet communication system

REACH FURTHER

Explore continuous pressure monitoring with ally meter

“Smart digital technology helps us maintain reliable, remotely-managed operations and improve our commitment to customer service.”

*Scott Ham, Manager
Silver Creek Water Corporation*

A new standard of service

Silver Creek Water Corporation’s meter specialists have their monitoring process down to a science. They can now read and assess 8,026 meters by lunchtime, a feat that previously took about two weeks to complete. This constant access to data has led to prompt leak detection and proactive customer service.

“A customer’s garden hose burst in the backyard due to high temperatures,” said Aaron Orman, a meter specialist at Silver Creek Water Corporation. “The meter was showing a loss of 400 to 500 gallons of water an hour, and the customer had no idea. Because we received an alert as soon as the issue began, we were able to call the customer and address it before the customer even knew what was happening.”

Orman explains that if the utility was still dependent on manual meter readings, this high rate of water loss could have continued for the next month. This level of customer service hasn’t gone unnoticed.

“Once we explain to customers that we pinpointed their water loss issue by monitoring analytics, they’ll often call at the first of the month and ask us to check the data to make sure everything is back in working order,” said Ham.

Another example was a high use alert of 700 gallons per hour at a movie theater shut down during the height of the coronavirus pandemic. Silver Creek’s staff worked with the theater’s manager to find the source of the problem – water leaking unnoticed into an underground storm sewer in the business’ parking lot.

Dedicated to continuous improvement

Silver Creek’s long-standing relationship with Sensus is characterized by constant improvement and innovation.

“The hills here cause water pressure concerns for us, as they can lead to service interruptions and tank overflows,” said Ham. “Along with conducting a water-loss audit by pressure zone, we are using [ally®](#) water meters for continuous pressure monitoring and the [Smart Gateway Sensor Interface](#) to monitor our water tank levels.”

The water provider chose to install ally meters in every pressure zone for enhanced emergency preparedness. Silver Creek will receive an early warning with any sudden drop in pressure within their distribution network. The reliable data helps pinpoint potential service issues and justify compliance for boil orders.

As part of the [Sensus Partner and Advisor Network](#), Ham credits other utilities with exchanging ideas and helping him continually learn. Now, Silver Creek sets an example of how to proactively address customers’ needs.

“Smart digital technology helps us maintain reliable, remotely-managed operations and improve our commitment to customer service,” said Ham. “Working with Sensus has been progressive and outstanding, and it gets better and better over time. When we show people how quickly and efficiently the technology works, it sells itself.”



The wireless technology allows Silver Creek to instantly check on programmed or stored information. The utility can retrieve data, validate reads or verify settings for optimal performance.

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