

REJUVENATING AN UNDERGROUND CABLE PROJECT

An underground power cable connecting an upscale Arizona subdivision to Sulphur Springs Valley Electric Cooperative distribution lines is getting old, and failures were becoming more frequent. To solve the problem, Pete Swiatek, maintenance & operations supervisor at the Willcox, Ariz.-based co-op, decided to test a cable-life extension injection system from Novinium.

"We assigned the task to the same crew that worked with our previous injection company to gain an apples-to-apples comparison of the two methods," Swiatek says. "The crew reported that while the Novinium initial setup time was somewhat longer, the total time spent per segment was much less. The Novinium approach did not require the crew to return to the transformer multiple times. They got in and got out."

The Novinium process also allowed for all equipment to be quickly loaded in the back of a pickup each day. "A larger vehicle to haul injection bottles was not required because the same injection bottle is used on every run," Swiatek adds. "Its procedures left little room for error and produced detailed project records."

He continues, "Novinium's process was also good at locating splices. In fact, we found two splices that previously were unknown."

The entire subdivision project took only six and a half days.



"Despite being short a person one day, the project moved ahead according to plan," Swiatek sums up. "That meant real cost savings for us."

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novinium
cable life extension

IMPROVING SERVICE BY TRACKING THE FLEET

A versatile outage management system from Milsoft had helped Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative in Kaufman, Texas, plot service calls, track outages, and model responses. But the co-op was still experiencing problems keeping tabs on line crews in the field.

So Trinity Valley Electric's Jeff Lane asked Milsoft for recommendations on how to improve its tracking abilities. The result was a partnership with Wireless Matrix for a fleet management program that ties in tightly with the co-op's existing outage management system.

"Now dispatchers can see both service needs and technician locations on the same screen, enabling them to handle workflow more efficiently and service calls more responsively," Lane declares.

Trinity Valley Electric previously depended on line crews checking in over a private radio network to keep tabs on locations and compare them to problem areas. But during outages, air-time was scarce as crews flooded the dispatch center with calls.

"Even under normal operating conditions, our radio network's coverage was spotty, resulting in inefficient assignments and even safety concerns," Lane mentions.

Wireless Matrix's Availability Analysis Program found a way for the co-op to get nearly 99 percent coverage of its six-county service territory with cellular transmission—an improvement that allowed Trinity Valley Electric to outfit more than twice as many service vehicles for the same cost.

That, in turn, has led to reduced outage response times, improved operational efficiencies, better safety procedures, lower fuel and vehicle maintenance costs, and increased staff and member satisfaction.

"The money we're saving with Wireless Matrix's fleet management capabilities exceeds the amount of money we're spending on services," Lane calculates. "We now have more control over our operations, creating new opportunities to increase service levels and consumer satisfaction."

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