

EPCOR USA TAPS CITYWORKS, WOOLPERT FOR MULTI-STATE AMS IMPLEMENTATION

BY CHRISTINA MARTINEZ, GISP, PROJECT MANAGER, WOOLPERT

EPCOR USA, ARIZONA & NEW MEXICO

Pop. Served: 350,000+

Depts. Using Cityworks:

14 Water Districts,
6 Wastewater Districts

Staff Using Cityworks: 100+

User Since: 2015

EPCOR USA, the largest private water utility in Arizona and New Mexico, has high standards when it comes to serving its customers. This is evident from the 94 safety and operational excellence awards the Phoenix-based company received from the Arizona Water Association since 2012, to the 2017 Economic Driver IMPACT Award bestowed by the Greater Phoenix Chamber of Commerce.

Therefore, it should come as no surprise that EPCOR selected Cityworks and long-standing partner Woolpert to provide the company's more than 215,000 customers with resources beyond the average asset management implementation.

"EPCOR's main goal with this implementation was to have a system built on the company's approach to infrastructure maintenance and management throughout all systems and divisions," said Les Masopust, EPCOR maintenance reliability manager. "We also wanted to improve our asset repository data, attribution accuracy and condition ratings, and integrate service orders from our third-party customer information system."

STARTING FROM A GOOD FOUNDATION

Knowledge, whether from a veteran employee or a computer database, is considered to be the single most important aspect of asset management. Successful asset management programs merge historical data with current asset information to paint a clear, comprehensive portrait of system inventory and conditions.

EPCOR USA is a subsidiary of the 126-year-old EPCOR Utilities Inc., which is based in Edmonton, Canada, and provides services to close to 2 million people. In addition to being the largest private water utility in Arizona and New Mexico, EPCOR USA also provides wholesale water and regulated natural gas utility services in Texas. EPCOR's enduring history

and reputation supports their long-term success. As a result, retaining and leveraging the company's institutional knowledge to ensure the continuity of service also was a key component in this implementation.

Like other utilities across the world, EPCOR was transitioning from a paper-based asset and work order system to an enterprise asset management system. Over the years, EPCOR's asset inventory and workflows consisted of a combination of paper and electronic maps, spreadsheets, and a wealth of institutional knowledge. While there were rigorous business processes in place to maintain this information, it was not the most efficient system. EPCOR sought a more effective way to maintain its asset inventory and work management data, and the Cityworks AMS implementation provided an easy-to-follow route for EPCOR to upgrade from its legacy management system to a more robust, integrated, and timeless enterprise AMS.

To do so, staff buy-in would be essential, especially given the number of utility districts and staff spread across two states. Woolpert senior analyst Qwyla Foutch said EPCOR staff embraced the implementation, and that was the key to its success.

"Projects of this nature have a high failure rate, but through EPCOR's conscious efforts to involve key stakeholders from all areas of operations, both early on and throughout the process, the utility's AMS implementation was met with acceptance and enthusiasm," Foutch said. "By doing so, the utility built on its well-earned foundation and retained this invaluable competitive edge, while accelerating their efficiency through technology. This allowed them to maintain the information that has been integral to their function and longevity."

FLUIDITY

Another key requirement of the implementation was integration with EPCOR's third-party call center using the Cityworks Work Order API. A design concern of EPCOR's was to ensure that transactional data did not get lost with the integration, and that continuity of service could always be maintained.

"It's not acceptable to lose work orders just because you have a system reboot," Foutch said. "Integrations are so much more than pushing data in or out. Implementing a high uptime and reliable integration

requires more experience and an understanding of the pitfalls of network communication."

Woolpert drew from its experience conducting roughly 400 Cityworks AMS implementations—more than any other firm.

"Using this message-based integration system provides somewhat of a safety tether, in the event there is a network outage or system reboot," Foutch said. "If a message fails, it is saved and automatically retried. If that happened multiple times, the message is stored in an error queue and an administrator is notified."

[continued on page 20](#)

Cityworks AMS layout as used by EPCOR staff. Image courtesy of EPCOR USA.

