



# OKLAHOMA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE IMPROVES RESPONSE TIMES WITH VEHICLE TRACKING

VVEC Integrates GPS Trackit with its outage maps to dispatch service vehicles more efficiently.

## Customer Profile



### BUSINESS TYPE:

Verdigris Valley Electric Cooperative is the third-largest electric cooperative in Oklahoma, serving electricity to more than 38,700 residential, commercial and industrial customers in 5 counties.

### LOCATION:

Headquartered in Collinsville, Oklahoma, with satellite offices in Nowata and Bartlesville

### CHALLENGES:

- Vehicle positioning map refreshed only every 15 minutes
- Lost radio signals resulted in loss of automatic vehicle location (AVL) tracking
- Inefficient network in dense, remote areas

### SOLUTION:

- GPS Trackit integrated with NISC's MultiSpeak outage map system
- UScellular® 5G network, strong in rural areas

### RESULTS SINCE LAUNCH:

- Ability to dispatch vehicles more quickly to outage areas
- Increased member satisfaction from reduced response times and shorter outages
- Ability to refute disputes of unsafe driving events.

VVEC aims to keep its customers happy and that means fewer outages. But when the inevitable happens, the electric cooperative's goal is to reduce response time and quickly restore power.

For years, they relied on a vehicle positioning system that refreshed only every 15 minutes, failing to provide real-time locations of their service vehicles. Furthermore, they were using a radio-based system that often lost a signal, especially in their northern service territory.

Danny Bement, VVEC Operations Manager, sought to improve their tracking system and reached out to longtime partner UScellular® for solutions. He worked alongside his dedicated Utilities Account Manager to identify the right product to make VVEC more efficient.

### ***Finding the Right Solution***

VVEC had to find a solution that would integrate with their NISC outage mapping system, however, the first product they considered was not compatible with the software. "They proposed around \$6,000 to \$8,000 for reprogramming so that it could become compatible with MultiSpeak and still really no guarantees," Bement said. "So, we went back to the drawing board with UScellular and that's how GPS Trackit came into the picture."

GPS Trackit was already familiar with MultiSpeak and had an existing integration. With the new platform, VVEC could immediately receive real-time vehicle positioning that overlaid onto their district maps. Bement said that GPS Trackit refreshes every 5-10 seconds—as close to real time as possible.

"From the features we needed, as well as the MultiSpeak integration, it just checked all the boxes for us," he said.

### ***Increased Capabilities***

GPS Trackit, powered by UScellular, also provides vehicle path histories that can trace past activities of their bucket trucks to ensure they were not involved in road incidents. "You have several different contractors driving around in small buckets, and we get phone calls on how 'one of your bucket trucks cut me off,' or 'they ran a red light'," Bement said.

But with vehicle positioning and breadcrumbs recording their paths, Bement and his team are able to obtain a date and a time estimate from any driver and see whether or not it was one of their vehicles involved. "And so far, it's worked well."

They can also now rely on GPS Trackit to view maintenance codes on a disabled vehicle. This is especially important when a vehicle breaks down in a rural area. The team can provide maintenance codes to

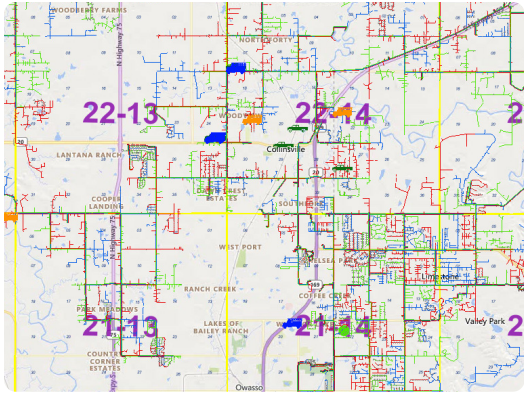


**"The shorter the outage time,  
the quicker you can turn the  
lights back on and help  
reduce labor cost"**

**— Danny Bement,  
VVEC Operations Manager**



*Line workers quickly dispatched to restore power*



Integration with NISC/Multispeak OMS

“The coverage seems to be the best with UScellular® for our service territory. It’s important for us to have that level of reliable communication with our field personnel.”

— **Danny Bement**



“Implementation was simple and straightforward. It’s been running since day one and there hasn’t been anything we’ve had to do.”

— **Justin Stowers**,  
VVEC IT Specialist

a mechanic, who diagnoses the issue in advance. They can bring the right tools and parts to the broken-down vehicle, rather than someone having to travel to the field, diagnose the issue and go back for the right tools.

“It’s just more efficient,” Bement said, adding that they have used the feature in the past and it worked well. In the future, they can also use the platform to track routine maintenance of all vehicles.

### **Integration is King**

Integration was VVEC’s number one goal with GPS Trackit. They use it to overlay real-time vehicle tracking with outage maps in order to dispatch the service truck closest to the outage. This results in a faster response time to help ensure public safety.

“It helps our dispatcher send the closest truck in the event a situation or outage needs to be dealt with immediately, Bement said. “VVEC operates within set boundaries for our service territory encompassing five counties. If an immediate need arose, it would be beneficial for the dispatcher to see the closest truck available whether or not it was in their assigned area. This is especially helpful when the need is a downed line or pole that may pose a safety hazard to the general public. So, it helps reduce response time when life or property is on the line.

“The list of things for which reduced response time could be the difference maker is endless” he said.

### **Results**

Bement says that from a financial standpoint, they are saving money by restoring outages faster and more efficiently, reducing fuel and labor cost.

“The shorter the outage time, the quicker you can turn the lights back on and help reduce labor cost” Bement said.

He added that a quicker response leads to happier members. “Instead of just pulling a name out of a hat to call for help, we’re able to see on the map a vehicle location in the field and can call the closest truck to come help and get that line back on faster,” Bement said.

VVEC has also experienced savings more from increased service to the membership than any financial savings. “If we’re spending less, as a not-for-profit cooperative, it bleeds over to the membership from a financial standpoint, but the biggest thing is continuity of service,” Bement said. “Customer service is our number one goal. And so far, it’s worked well.”



*VVEC vehicles supported by UScellular's Fleet Solution*

### ***Why UScellular***

VVEC has been a UScellular customer for more than 20 years. “The coverage seems to be the best with UScellular for our service territory. It’s important for us to have that level of reliable communication with our field personnel,” Bement said.

Justin Stowers, VVEC IT specialist, said that UScellular made implementation really simple and straightforward. “It was just a matter of plugging in a little bit of data into our system to point to the GPS Trackit service,” he said. “At that point, it was mainly plugging devices into the trucks, whenever we could get them here on site and only took a couple of minutes per unit.”

UScellular’s GPS Trackit solution requires very little maintenance. “It’s been running since day one and there hasn’t been anything we’ve had to do,” Stowers added.

To learn more about UScellular tracking solutions, visit [Vehicle Tracking | UScellular for Business](#).

