



Insights from Networkfleet® Help Benfield Electric Reduce Costs by \$10,000 per Year

Summary

Benfield Electric Co. Inc. is saving approximately \$10,000 each year by using Networkfleet's wireless fleet management solution to reduce idling, speeding and off-hour usage.

Problem

Benfield Electric is the largest residential and commercial electrical contractor in Maryland, with five offices in the tri-state area, and one of the leading 400 electrical contractors in the nation. The secret to the company's success is doing quality work at a fair price. Keeping costs down while providing top customer service is essential.

In 2006, the company's Manassas, VA location noticed increases in operating expenses that couldn't be explained. "We needed to get a better handle on what was going on within our fleet of 54 vehicles," said Jim Tharp, Service Manager at Benfield Electric. "The GPS fleet tracking system that we installed that year wasn't doing the job. The units kept breaking down. We had spotty data and no reliable way to flag problem areas."

Solution

Tharp asked Falcon Communications Solutions, Benfield Electric's telecommunications provider, for a solution. As a Networkfleet Platinum Partner, Falcon Communications knew the Networkfleet system well and vouched for the system's reliability. Falcon Communications invited Tharp to a Networkfleet demo so he could see for himself.

Networkfleet's web-based technology combines vehicle diagnostic monitoring with an online GPS fleet tracking system, including reporting tools and alerts for tracking vehicle locations, trip details and driving habits.

"I was impressed with the Networkfleet units," Tharp said. "They seemed much more robust than the units we'd been using and had all the features we needed to identify our problem areas."

In October 2007, Falcon Communications installed Networkfleet units on all of Benfield Electric's 54 vehicles, most of which are vans and light trucks.

Results

Using Networkfleet's GPS tracking capability, Tharp has immediate visibility into fleet activity and can schedule vehicles for jobs in the same area on a given day. Since 35% of his drivers are allowed to take vehicles home, he can also make sure no one uses company vehicles for personal reasons.

"Using Networkfleet, we can monitor speeding, idling and odd-hour usage – habits known to increase fuel consumption," said Tharp. "It was easy to create thresholds and set up three Networkfleet reports that would flag these factors on a daily basis."

The Networkfleet idle time report identifies drivers who consistently post excessive idling (defined by the company as either more than 2 hours per day or 10% of driving time) so that Tharp can take corrective action. "It's normal to want to idle vehicles during hot or cold weather," said Tharp. "I don't blame anyone, but it wastes fuel and costs money."

The Networkfleet odd-hours report highlights which vehicles are used outside normal work hours. Similarly, Tharp uses the Networkfleet speed violation report to determine drivers who habitually speed (defined as 72+ mph).

Tharp also uses Networkfleet for more efficient routing and to verify drivers' timesheets, which eliminates billing for work not performed. "Drivers no longer take back roads to a site," said Tharp. "Networkfleet ensures that each driver is taking the shortest route and that they are charging only for work performed. If half of our field employees left the job 15 minutes early every day, we would be paying \$425 in unearned wages, and that's being conservative."

By using Networkfleet to monitor and change drivers' habits, Benfield Electric saves money on fuel and hourly labor costs and reduces wear-and-tear on vehicles. Tharp estimates that Networkfleet paid for itself in 18 months and continues to save the company money.

"Eliminating unnecessary driving keeps fuel use down and extends the life of the vehicle," Tharp said. "So does reducing speeding and idling, which are both fuel wasters and hard on the vehicle. Altogether, I estimate we save about \$10,000 in fuel costs simply by changing these three behaviors."

Results

- *Saved \$10,000 annually by changing driver behavior.*
- *Achieved return on investment in 18 months.*
- *Gained insight into trip details, including use of inefficient routes, idling and stops.*
- *Decreased fuel usage and reduced miles driven per day.*
- *Eliminated use of vehicles during after hours and weekends.*

For more information on Networkfleet visit networkfleet.com or call 866.869.1353.